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Marshalls

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS OPERATIONS

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WASHINGTON

Foreword

This account of the Marshall Islands Operations is another of a series of monographs concerning important engagements of the Marine Corps in World War II.

The information has been compiled from official records and from interviews with a number of officers who took part in the operation and have made valuable comments and criticism.

It is believed that in the map of Eniwetok Atoll the island of Yeiri does not immediately adjoin the island of Rujiyuro, but maps available with code names and geographical names are sometimes conflicting. It will be apprcciated if Yeiri Island can be definitely distinguished and a correction made if necessary. Furthermore, in any final issue of this monograph all maps will show the scale.

A limited number of copies are being sent to officers of various units who were engaged. It is hoped that the recipients will read the account with care and that they will forward to the Historical Division any comments regarding accuracy or omission which tend to make the narrative misleading or incomplete. It will be apprcciated if these comments can be sent forward to reach this Headquarters not more than sixty days after receipt of the pamphlet so that revision may be undertaken without too long delay. Please pass the pamphlet on to any officers you think may be interested and who likewise would be in a position to make valuable criticism.

The classification is RESTRICTED.

JOHN POTTS
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Officer-in-Charge,
Historical Division

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS OPERATIONS

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Map facing page 2 illustrates Section X

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS OPERATIONS

SECTION I

Introduction

As the operations in the Pacific theatre have become clarified by more complete information, the various assaults arrange themselves into an orderly plan. The Guadalcanal campaign halted the hitherto unstoppable advance of the Japanese into the South Seas which threatened the safety of Australia and New Zealand. The Bougainville campaign turned the tide northward; the heavy fighting in New Guinea and New Britain (Cape Gloucester) helped additionally to neutralize the Japanese land based air forces.

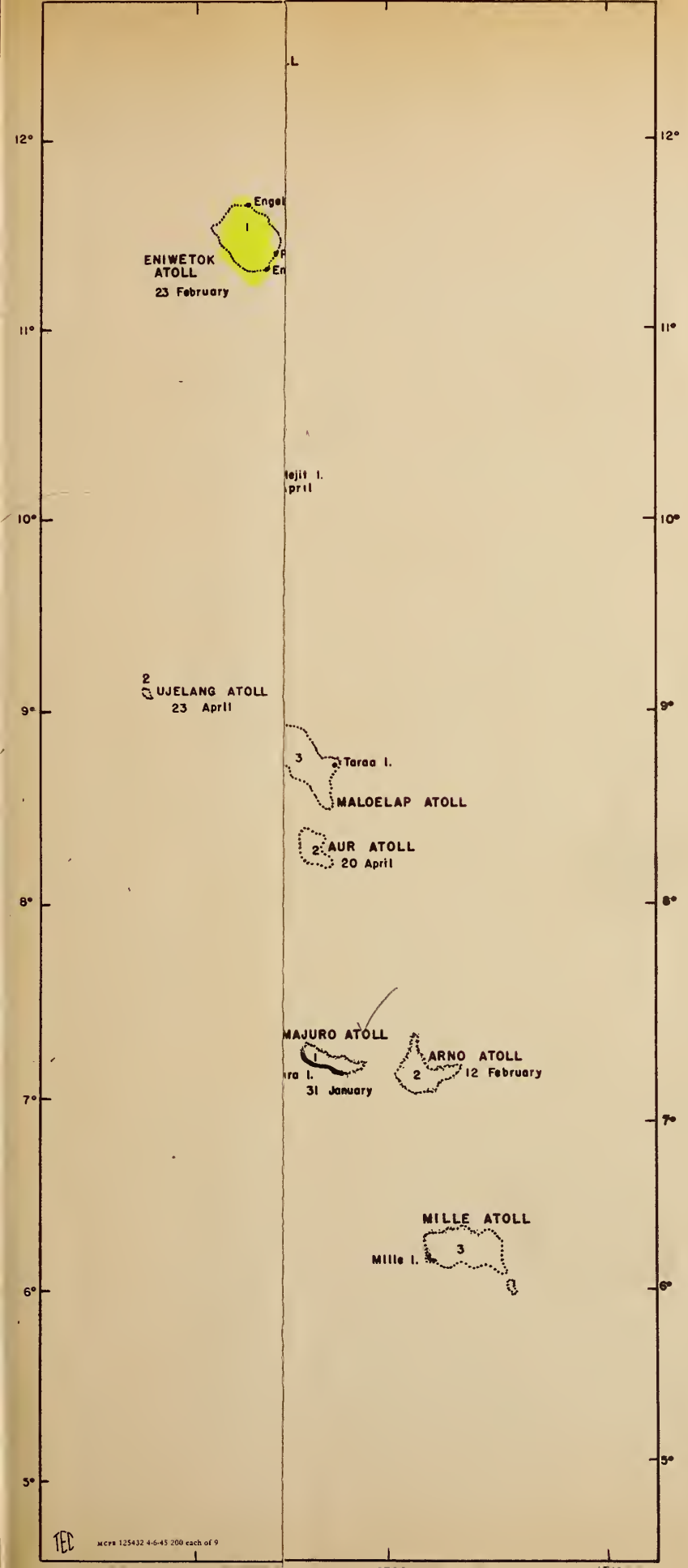
To the northeast some 1000 nautical miles from Guadalcanal lay Tarawa, chief bastion of the Gilbert Islands. This was seized in November 1943 in the first assault on an atoll by American Amphibious Forces. Lessons were learned in that costly but successful attack which were put to sound use in the further advance westward through the Marshalls.

The engagements which come under the general head of the Marshall Islands Operation are divided into four parts. Of these the two most important--the seizure of Kwajalein and Eniwetok Atolls--are in turn divided in two. Majuro, the third atoll seized, was undefended and its capture, though strategically important, is of much less interest as an amphibious operation. The fourth phase is the reconnaissance of the Lesser Marshalls and the elimination of enemy forces on them.

Kwajalein Atoll was assaulted by two separate forces--under the Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps--the Northern Landing Force and the Southern Landing Force. Each assault, though part of an integrated whole was separate and must be treated separately. The same holds true for the assault on Eniwetok where the troops were again divided into a Northern and a Southern Landing Force, each engaged in the capture of the principal islands of the atoll and their neighboring satellites.

This account will deal, in turn, with the separate engagements, bearing in mind their essential coherence and unity which will show what we wished to do and why and how we did it.

Plans for the seizure of the Marshall Islands had been initiated months before. There were many elements to consider but transportation was the paramount problem. It was determined that it would be neither possible nor strategically


12°
11°
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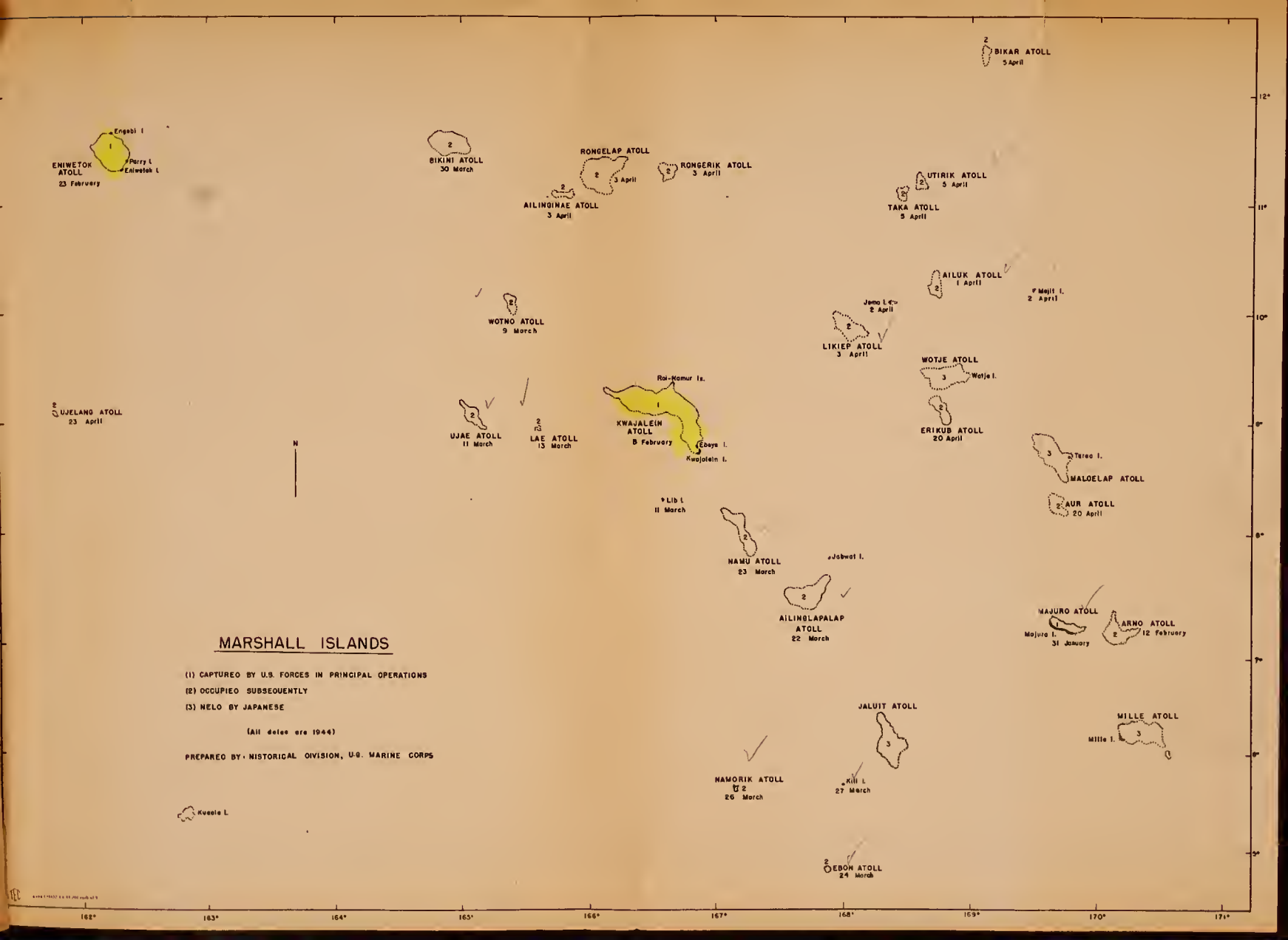
ENIWETOK ATOLL
23 February
UJELANG ATOLL
23 April
Taraa I.
MALOELAP ATOLL
AUR ATOLL
20 April
MAJURO ATOLL
31 January
ARNO ATOLL
12 February
MILLE ATOLL
Mille I.


MARSHALL ISLANDS
(1) CAPTURED BY U.S. FORCES IN PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS
(2) OCCUPIED SUBSEQUENTLY
(3) HELD BY JAPANESE
(All dates are 1944)
PREPARED BY HISTORICAL DIVISION, U.S. MARINE CORPS
N
ENIWETOK ATOLL
23 February
Engebi I
Parry I
Enjebi I
BIKINI ATOLL
30 March
RONGELAP ATOLL
3 April
RONGERIK ATOLL
3 April
AILINGINAE ATOLL
3 April
BIKAR ATOLL
5 April
UTIRIK ATOLL
5 April
TAKA ATOLL
5 April
AILUK ATOLL
1 April
Majit I.
2 April
Jemo I.
2 April
LIKIEP ATOLL
3 April
WOTJE ATOLL
Wotje I.
ERIKUB ATOLL
20 April
WOTHO ATOLL
9 March
UJELANG ATOLL
23 April
UJAE ATOLL
11 March
LAE ATOLL
13 March
KWAJALEIN ATOLL
8 February
Roi-Namur Is.
Ebeye I.
Kwajalein I.
Lib I.
11 March
NAMU ATOLL
23 March
Jabwot I.
AILINGLAPALAP ATOLL
22 March
Terao I.
MALOELAP ATOLL
AUR ATOLL
20 April
MAJURO ATOLL
Majuro I.
31 January
ARNO ATOLL
12 February
MILLE ATOLL
Mille I.
JALUIT ATOLL
Kili I.
27 March
NAMORIK ATOLL
26 March
EBON ATOLL
24 March
Kusaie I.
162°
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advantageous to capture all of the defended atolls simultaneously. The question--one requiring finely balanced judgment--then arose as to which atolls should be seized and held. Two objectives were foremost; to establish permanent forward bases as staging areas for further advance and to protect these bases from enemy attacks launched from atolls in the Marshalls which still remained in Japanese hands.

The vehicles of amphibious warfare made tremendous advances in the latter part of 1943. It is interesting to note that the highest echelons were by no means convinced in the summer of 1943 of the practicability of assault landings with material then at our command as evidenced by the statement of Admiral Nimitz:

> "The practicability of amphibious trucks and amphibious tractors making landings through surf over coral has not yet been demonstrated to the satisfaction of Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. . . . . In order to minimize losses to personnel and material which can be expected when landing through surf the scheme of maneuver should include means of landing from the lagoon side of the atoll."

Yet not many weeks afterward, Admiral Spruance was writing to the Commander of the V Amphibious Force, (Rear Admiral R. K. Turner):

> "Reports of tests of amphibious tractors and amphibious trucks have indicated their satisfactory performance in making landings through surf over coral reefs. These tests are accepted as sufficiently conclusive for planning purposes."

The plans for seizure of the Marshalls were based on the successful completion of operations in the Gilbert Islands which had not at that moment occurred. (The assault on Tarawa began 20 November 1943). The factors favorable to the assault were summarized as follows:

a. The necessary strength appeared available.
b. The operation would provide for further advance toward communication lines vital to the enemy.
c. It would strengthen our lines of communication to the South and Southwest Pacific.
d. It might precipitate fleet action with the enemy on favorable terms and afford opportunity to inflict attrition losses which the enemy could ill afford.
e. The projected timing of the operation should cause

> the enemy to divide in considerable degree his available forces among various theatres.[1]

And as Admiral Nimitz added, "thus, we get on with the War."

It is a trite saying that distances in the Pacific are vast, and there most people let the matter rest. But take any large scale map of the western Pacific and you will discover to your surprise that the Marshalls are at the extreme east of it and the Philippines near the west, the two groups separated by apparently little but a vast expanse of blue. Actually the distance from Kwajalein to Leyte in nautical miles is about 2500 and roughly between them lie the Carolines and the Marianas and the Palaus, the latter two now wrested from the enemy after desperate fighting. Pearl Harbor is 2125 miles to the northeast. In turn the little dots on the map which indicate the Marshall group, resolve themselves on a larger scale into thirty-two atolls, each containing groups of adjoining islands of considerable extent, clustering round lagoons up to sixty-five miles long.

From Mille, the principal atoll on the southeast, to Eniwetok at the extreme northwest, the distance is approximately 650 miles. Kwajalein Atoll lies in about the center of the group (see map, page 2). From the beginning, the plans contemplated its seizure and retention as the primary objective of the operation, thus by-passing strongly held Wotje and Maloelap.

After our capture of Tarawa enemy troops were rushed from Kwajalein to Mille and Jaluit where the defenses were considerably strengthened. The fact that they were the nearest Marshalls to the newly won Tarawa and Makin undoubtedly furthered the enemy expectations that these atolls would become the next objects of attack. Further, the Japanese undoubtedly were expecting lagoon landings after the manner of the Gilberts, because the 4th Fleet (Japanese) Commander ordered the lagoon beaches in the Marshalls mined and fortified shortly after the Gilberts operation. When the great blow came well inside his strong Marshalls perimeter and on the end of islands (except in the case of Roi and Namur) it can safely be said that tactical as well as strategical surprise were in large measure achieved. At Kwajalein when stock was taken there was evidence of much hasty preparation for defense. Quantities of lumber, cement, steel beams and the like and even tubes of guns of considerable size were found ready

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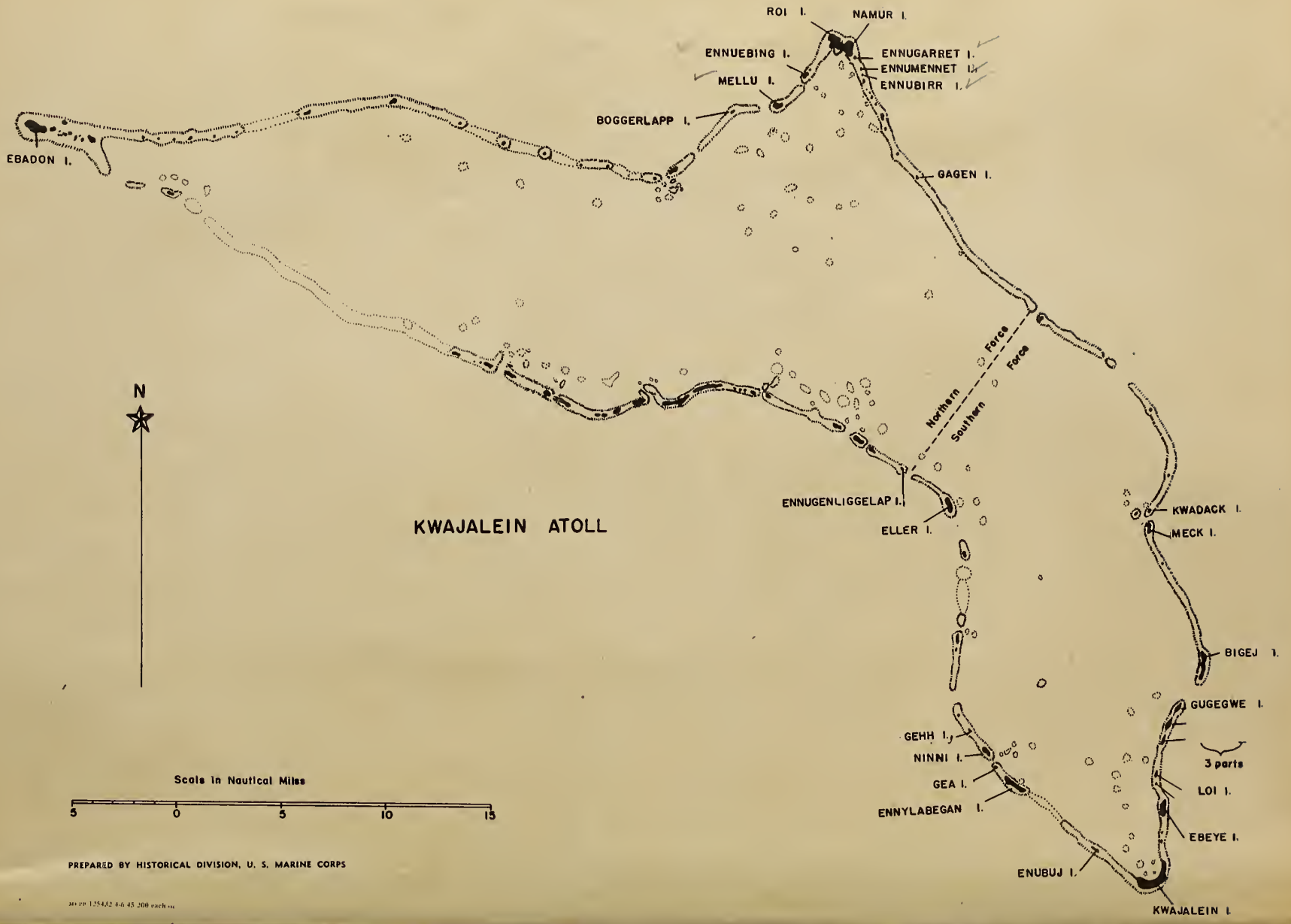
[1] Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet, Serial 00151, 20 August 1943.


ROI I.
NAMUR I.
ENNUEBING I.
ENNUGARRET I.
ENNUMENNET I.
ENNUBIRR I.
MELLU I.
BOGGERLAPP I.
EBADON I.
GAGEN I.
Northern Force
Southern Force
ENNUGENLIGGELAP I.
ELLER I.
KWADACK I.
MECK I.
KWAJALEIN ATOLL
N
BIGEJ I.
GUGEGWE I.
GEHH I.
NINNI I.
GEA I.
ENNYLABEGAN I.
3 parts
LOI I.
EBEYE I.
ENUBUJ I.
KWAJALEIN I.
Scale in Nautical Miles
5 0 5 10 15
PREPARED BY HISTORICAL DIVISION, U. S. MARINE CORPS

use. Undoubtedly the repeated bombardment by air and surface forces of Wotje and Maloelap, as well as Kwajalein (with the intention of neutralizing the airstrip) not only had a demoralizing effect, but left the enemy confused and unable to estimate accurately where the landings were coming despite the realization of their imminence. It seems possible that the attack on Kwajalein was no more than suspected until D-day itself, when our transports and landing craft were visible off shore.

In all of the assaults code names were given the atolls and the principal islands surrounding their lagoons. In most instances only a few of the islands are of importance to the account of the operations and for purposes of security the native names have herein been universally employed. However, it seems fitting here to pay tribute to some sublimated worthy. In modern warfare the Navy has called upon the talents of many specialists. It is pleasant to imagine that the preparer of the various code appellations was, in civilian life, a highly skilled Pullman Car Namer.

SECTION II

KWAJALEIN

Intelligence

Kwajalein Atoll, largest of the Marshalls, lies on a northwest-southeast axis and surrounds a lagoon nearly 65 miles long. In shape it reminds one vaguely of Lake Superior. Its maximum width at the center is about 18 miles and its circumference about 154. There are no natural elevations; the maximum height of the land is not in excess of 30 feet. There were three principal islands: Roi-Namur, linked together by a causeway, at the extreme north; and Kwajalein Island at the extreme south. The distance between the two groups is roughly 42 miles. To the southwest of Roi important islets which enter into the story are: Ennuebing, Mellu, and Boggerlapp. To the south and slightly east of Namur lie the islets of Ennugarret, Ennumennet and Ennubirr. Between Ennuebing and Mellu is a channel. A second channel divides Mellu and Boggerlapp.

At the southern end of the atoll, northwest of Kwajalein and distant about two miles, lies Enubuj. Next, on the westerly side, come Ennylabegan, Gea, Ninni and Gehh, the first of these lying about 6½ miles from Kwajalein's western tip. On the eastern side of the atoll and nearly directly north of Kwajalein lie Ebeye some two miles away, Loi, and the long thin strip of Gugegwe, which though actually a single island is held together by such narrow reefs as for all practical purposes to be three separate bits of land. Immediately beyond the northern tip of Gugegwe comes a channel about a

mile wide, the northern side of which is defined by Bigej Island.

To return to the principal islands of Roi and Namur, Roi is roughly 1250 yards long north and south, by 1200 yards wide east and west and almost entirely cleared of foliage. It was just able to contain one of the principal airstrips in the Marshalls, shaped like a giant figure "4". (See map, page 9). There was little or no room on Roi for anything but defensive installations and the buildings necessary for the operation of the airfield.

Namur, lying to the east, is about 800 yards north and south by 900 yards east and west, and is joined to Roi by a causeway about 500 yards long. The island is heavily wooded and contains a series of well articulated roads; there, were the barracks and other principal installations of the garrison.

Kwajalein Island itself (see map, page 18) is crescent or boomerang shaped about 2½ miles long by 800 yards wide at its widest point near the southwest. The northern tip gradually narrows to about 200 yards. There is a well-knit system of roads. The central and western portions had been extensively cleared for the construction of an airfield, which, at the time of the landings, was partially completed, but there were trees and heavy vegetation along the shore line.

There was a seaplane base on Ebeye and major Naval anchorages at various points in the western portion of the lagoon.

Intelligence had estimated that there were about 24,000 enemy troops in the Marshalls area, the bulk of whom were on Kwajalein, Wotje, Maloelap and Mille Atolls. Of these, it was thought, 2,700 to 3,100 men were on Roi and Namur including 400 to 600 Korean laborers. On Kwajalein and immediately adjoining islands, it was thought that there were 3,500 to 4,200 combatants plus 1,200 to 1,600 laborers, the total on both of the principal objectives of the atoll probably not in excess of 7,100. These forces were believed to include the 6th Base Force, the 61st Naval Guard Force and the 4th Civil Engineers (Korean); Rear Admiral Monzo Akiyama was in command. He is said to have been killed on Kwajalein on 2 February. It was thought not unlikely that reinforcements might be sent in, but our attack came before this could be accomplished.

Before the operation there had been photographic coverage by air on a scale previously not attempted and submarines had also taken photographs from advantageous points off shore. The terrain had been very carefully studied, mindful, perhaps, from the experience at Tarawa, of underestimating the strength

of the defensive installations. It had been thought that the enemy was much more formidably prepared than proved to be the case.

Reconnaissance had shown, however, that defenses of the islands were to seaward rather than on the lagoon, though considerable preparations were under way toward strengthening the defenses on the inner side.

A smartly conducted search for underwater obstacles disclosed nothing which was designed by man to impede the approaches.

SECTION III

Preparations for the Attack

The original plans for the simultaneous assaults of Wotje, Maloelap and Kwajalein were finally abandoned as being too much to bite off, though the two former atolls remained as alternative objectives to Kwajalein. In addition, one other atoll thought to be undefended was to be seized. On 17 Decembe 1943, CinCPac designated the 7th Infantry Division, U. S. Army (reinforced) to assault and capture Kwajalein Island and the 4th Marine Division (reinforced) to take care of Roi and Namur.

The chain of command was as follows:

Joint Expeditionary Forces - TF 51 - Rear Admiral R. K. Turner
Expeditionary Troops - TF 56 - Major General H. M. Smith, USMC
Southern Attack Force - TF 52 - Rear Admiral R. K. Turner
Southern Landing Force - Major General C. H. Corlett, USA
Northern Attack Force - TF 53 - Rear Admiral R. L. Conolly
Northern Landing Force - Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC

The principal elements of the Southern Attack Force comprised the 7th Infantry Division and the 3d and 4th Army Defense Battalions. The Northern Force consisted primarily of the 4th Marine Division and the 15th Marine Defense Battalion. Corps Reserve consisted of the 22d Marines, reinforced, and the 106th Infantry, reinforced, less the 2d Battalion.

Majuro Atoll was to be seized by an attack group, TF 51-2, under Rear Admiral H. W. Hill. The landing force under Lieutenant Colonel F. H. Sheldon, USA, consisted of the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry.

Plans for the operation were even more complicated than usual due to the fact that various elements of the expeditionary forces were widely separated. The 22d Marines, RCT 184 of the 7th Division and RCT 106 of the 27th Division, held intensive training in the Hawaiian area during the latter part of December 1943. The 4th Marine Division, which had not yet been in combat, trained in the San Diego area for a month beginning in the middle of November. Concurrent with the training and planning phases the garrison units were assembled under the command of Rear Admiral A. D. Bernhard, USN, who was to be the commander garrison forces at Kwajalein Atoll, and Captain E. A. Cruise, USN, who was to command the Majuro garrison forces.

The 4th Marine Division held final rehearsals early in January at Camp Pendleton and San Clemente Island, the latter rehearsal being supported by actual Naval gunfire and air bombardment.

The 7th Infantry Division, reinforced, and the 22d Marines, reinforced, held a final rehearsal in the Hawaiian area under conditions of terrain thought to resemble as nearly as possible the objectives to be seized. Careful studies were made to insure that:

a. Troops would be embarked in strict accordance with the proposed tactical plan so that the assault, defense and garrison units would each arrive at their objective at the proper time.

b. Supplies would be loaded to support the scheme of maneuver.

c. Excess equipment would not be carried.

There was some confusion in the loading plans due to last minute changes; failure of certain supplies to arrive well ahead of time and the addition of units to the expeditionary forces, too late to include their equipment in the complete planning. By and large, however, the preparation was extraordinarily well done.

The Northern Attack Force, consisting of the Marine elements, departed San Diego for the Hawaiian area 13 January 1944, and arrived at Maui, T.H., 21 January. All forces departed the following day for their objectives. So far as is known the task groups arrived at Kwajalein undetected and thus gained complete strategic surprise. The movement was so well timed that all assault forces were on hand early on D-day; the defense battalions on D-day plus 2, and the garrison forces on D-day plus 5.[1]

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[1]There is an entry, however, in a captured Japanese diary that the force left Hawaii on the date mentioned "to attack us."

SECTION IV

KWAJALEIN ATOLL

Northern Attack Force

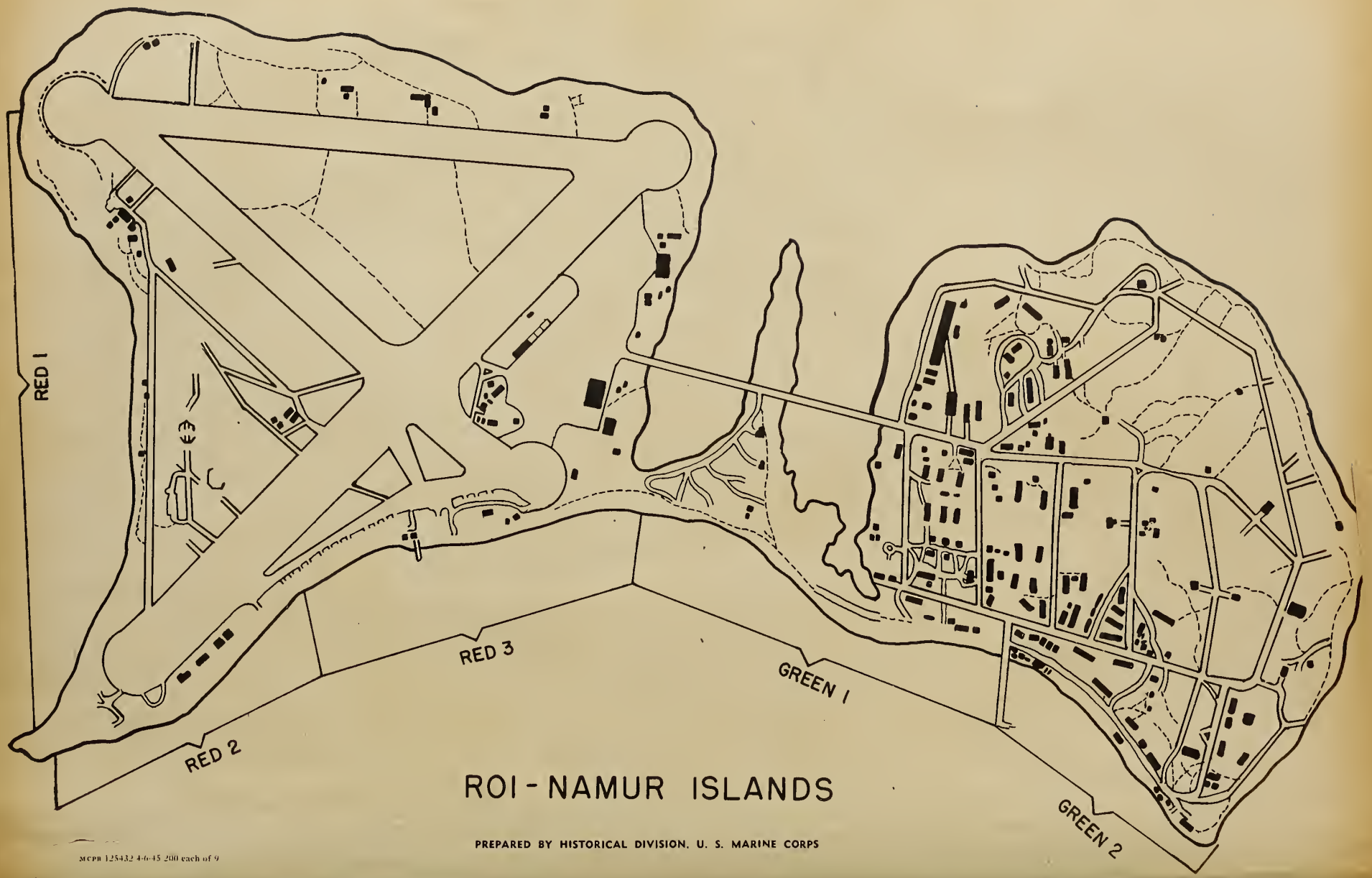
It now becomes necessary to break up the account into divisions, as the Northern and Southern Forces, though operating concurrently, were each involved in actions 40 miles apart. Inasmuch as this account deals essentially with actions of units of the Marine Corps, greater stress will be laid on them. The operations of the Southern Landing Force were, however, of equal importance and will receive due comment based on such records as are available to the Marine Corps. The plans in each case were similar. They called for very heavy Naval and air bombardment beginning on D-day minus 2. On D-day, landings were to be made on the smaller islands adjoining the principal objectives on which, after seizure, artillery was to be placed to support the Naval bombardment and the landing forces. On D-day plus 1, assaults were to be made on Roi and Namur by the Northern Landing Force and on Kwajalein by the Southern Landing Force.

For most of the previous month heavy air strikes had been made on Wotje, Maloelap, Mille, Kwajalein and Eniwetok with a view to making their landing fields inoperative. From the lessons at Tarawa, which had been taken to heart and even more important passed down to lower echelons in a space of less than 60 days, it had been determined that naval and air bombardment would be delivered with more devastating power.

The Northern Support Group consisted of the Battleships North Carolina, Alabama, South Dakota, Tennessee, Colorado and Maryland; the Heavy Cruisers Louisville and Indianapolis; the Light Cruisers Santa Fe, Mobile, and Biloxi, and eleven destroyers under the command of Rear Admiral J. B. Oldendorf. This concentration was in turn supported by the Northern Carrier Force under Rear Admiral V. H. Ragsdale; by Task Group 58.2 under Rear Admiral A. E. Montgomery consisting of the carriers, Intrepid, Essex and Cabot, and Task Force 53 under Rear Admiral V. H. Ragsdale consisting of the Suwanee, Sangamon and Chenango.

Installations on Roi-Namur consisted for the most part of concrete structures heavily reinforced. The islands had been cut up into numbered target areas and the schedule of ships' fire had been carefully coordinated so that not a yard of ground would be neglected and was certain to get a thorough going over at given intervals.

The plan of assault divided itself into three principal



ROI - NAMUR ISLANDS

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MCPR 125432 4-6-45 200 each of 9

phases:

1. D-day, landing of artillery after seizure of islands adjoining Roi-Namur.

2. D-day plus 1, the assault of Roi-Namur.

3. After successful completion of the main assault - the seizure of all other occupied or unoccupied islands in the northern sector of the Atoll.

The Northern Attack Force arrived in the transport area to the northwest of Roi-Namur at dawn on D-day, 31 January. Prior to their arrival the APD Schley carrying Company "D", 4th Scout Company, had landed the company in the dark from rubber boats. They made a reconnaissance of Ennuebing and Mellu Islands to the southwest of Roi on which the artillery was to be emplaced. It had been determined that these islands would be seized prior to a similar assault upon Ennumennet and Ennubirr, the islands immediately to the southeast of Namur. Ennugarret, the island next to Namur was also to be seized on D-day if time permitted. The weather was clear but the sea was choppy and the LVT's labored heavily. Landings in the case of the islands adjoining Roi were to be from the sea; the others from the lagoon. H-hour for the easterly landings depended on the assembly of light craft after the first attack but presumably about noon or 1300 at the latest.

LT 1/25 plus the Scout Company was assigned to the westerly landing, LT 2/25 for Ennubirr and LT 3/25 for Ennumennet and subsequently for Ennugarret. Sufficient LVT (2's) were available for only two landing teams and it was found necessary to employ ten LCVP's to boat the additional troops. It was planned that after landing LT 1/25 at their objectives to retract the LVT's from Ennuebing and Mellu and reboat LT 3/25 in them for the purpose of the attack on Ennugarret.

Unfortunately, things did not work out as planned and time schedules fell considerably behind. There were various reasons for this which requires only brief comment. One thing, it took much longer to debark the troops than was expected. There had never been time for a thorough rehearsal for this particular operation and the estimate of time was considerably below actuality. The respective crews of the LST's and the LVT's did not work sufficiently well together to know what each was expected to do and who was running the show.

LT's 2/25 and 3/25 were to go through Ennuebing Pass after assembling in their respective transfer areas. At a crucial moment in the operation DD Phelps, which was marking

the line of departure, was called to other duties in supporting the mine sweepers, leaving control of the situation to Submarine Chaser #997 (on which was embarked Brigadier General J. L. Underhill, USMC, the commanding general of the landing group). SC #997 unfortunately had neither sufficiently detailed orders nor communication facilities adequate to act as a substitute for the Phelps. In consequence, considerable mix up occurred which resulted in some of the LVT's following the Phelps southward whence they were diverted only after considerable difficulty and misunderstanding. It is not improbable that high words were used. In consequence, the landings on Ennuebing were not made until 0952 and on Mellu at about the same time. Opposition was very light. The islands were reported secured at 1055 and 1209 respectively. The landing of artillery began one hour later. Meanwhile about noon the Ennuebing Pass had been swept with negative result and preparations went forward for the easterly landings. Again considerable confusion resulted due apparently to imperfect understanding of their orders on the part of some LVT crews and the fact that they were in some instances stranded without fuel on Ennuebing and Mellu because of a much greater waterborne trip than had been originally anticipated.

The time for the easterly landings from the lagoon was set at 1430. Because of confusion they could not be effected until 1515. Again there was light opposition and the islands were reported secured by 1628. The delays in the previous operations might well have made it advisable to delay the capture of Ennugarret until the following day but at 1600 orders were received to attack immediately. It was impossible to do so at once because of lack of the necessary LVT's many of which, after debarking troops on Ennumennet and Ennubirr had retired to the western side of the lagoon in search of their LST's. But in spite of all difficulties the attack was launched at 1800. The landings began about 1815 and the island was reported secured by 2000. Landing of the artillery on the adjoining islands to the south began in the afternoon, was carried out through the night and by the morning of D-day plus 1 all batteries had registered on their respective targets on Roi-Namur.

The 3d (75mm Pack Howitzers) and the 4th Battalions (105mm Howitzers) of the 14th Marines were emplaced on Ennuebing and Mellu Islands, to the west of Roi and Namur, and the 1st and 2d Battalions (75mm Pack Howitzers) 14th Marines on Ennumennet and Ennubirr. On D-day plus 1, the day set for the landings on Roi-Namur, the naval forces again delivered devastating fire on the islands. At H-hour minus 45 carrier forces delivered a heavy strike. Then, for a period of fifteen minutes, bombing was concentrated on the pillboxes near the beaches and strafing the beaches continued until

the boat waves were within comparatively short distance. The time for landing had been originally set for 1000 but was later changed to 1100. Actually, however, the landings were not made until 1200 because again factors of time and space had been miscalculated. The supporting arms, however, had been kept informed of the change of time and the weight of the bombardment was not impaired.

The plan called for RCT 23 to land on beaches Red 2 and 3 on the lagoon side of Roi, and for RCT 24 to land on beaches Green 1 and 2 on Namur, also fronting the lagoon. On Roi there was no resistance at the beach and it remained light until Line O-1 was reached at 1217. The island had little vegetation because of the airfield and its accompanying installations, and appeared completely deserted as the first wave approached. Within an hour after the landing some of the tanks had progressed beyond the Line O-1, and about two companies of infantry had followed them. Fortunately, naval gunfire had ceased and was solely on call. The movement, it later appeared, was initiated by the Tank Company Commander, who, finding the going unexpectedly easy had taken upon himself to find out what enemy lay to the north. The units were recalled to Line O-1 without much harm having come to them, but there had been moments, when they had strayed beyond their intentioned limits, that the operation might have been jeopardized.

It had been planned to continue the attack beyond Line O-1 at 1515, but due to certain delays Landing Team 2/23 on the right did not jump off until 1530 and Landing Team 1/23 to its left could not get away till 1600. This caused no serious dilemma as the advance was to be made up the east and west coasts of the island. It showed, however, a lack of coordination in untried troops that might have endangered the success of the attack. Fire discipline was far from satisfactory which can be mostly explained by the overwhelming desire to account for a live Jap. Nevertheless, there were times when it was somewhat risky to become exposed to fire which was supposedly friendly.

An abused phrase is "opposition was light," because to the people who haven't been there it sounds like a walk in the park. But fighting the Japs in any terrain is a task which requires both training and solid hardihood. He will get you if he can, so try to get him first. During the attack on Roi, PFC Richard B. Anderson, Company "E", 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, found himself with five other companions in a shell hole made by a 16" shell. He drew out a grenade to hurl it at a trench nearby. As he did so the pin caught in his gear and pulled out. Realizing that the missile had to be thrown instantly, he dropped it in his haste and it rolled to the bottom of the shell hole. Anderson threw himself upon it just before it exploded and sacrificed

himself for the others. The Medal of Honor, awarded posthumously, was his just due. "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

RCT 23 reorganized and jumped off again at 1630. By 1800 the north edge of Roi had been reached six hours after the landings and there appeared to be only sporadic resistance despite much mopping up also left to be done. This continued through the night and by 0800, 2 February, the island was reported secured, twenty hours after the landing.

For the assault of Namur, there was a considerable amount of confusion in getting the waves off from the Line of Departure with the result that LT's 2/24 and 3/24 got away before their respective reserve elements had been properly lined up. In consequence, many elements of RCT 24 had to be committed piecemeal, due in large measure to lack of a suitable number of LVT's and a lack of control over those which were available. Further tribulation resulted from the fact that two companies of the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion (LVT(A)'s) had been ordered to land and precede the assault troops 100 yards inland. However, the craft halted before reaching the beach, forcing the troop-laden LVT's to work their way through them, and continued to fire through the assault units. It seems a miracle that no friendly troops were hit.

LT 2/24 on the right received very little fire from the beach when it first landed and its chief preoccupation was to avoid being cut down from the rear by the misdirected attentions of the LVT(A)'s. It was necessary to unload the troops from the tractors due to an antitank ditch close to the beach. Troops pushed rapidly inland on foot for about 200 yards against light resistance. LT 3/24 upon landing met more determined opposition from close-in beach defenses. However, the two companies were able to move inland by by-passing some pillboxes and blockhouses leaving the mopping up of rear areas to the reserve company which landed about 1245. Elements of LT 1/24 had been held in reserve at the Line of Departure about 2000 yards from the beach awaiting decision as to when and where they should be committed. Upon receipt of information that LT 2/24 had made a penetration of the beach, they proceeded to Beach Green 2 and landed at about 1325.

Their progress to the beach was hampered by a terrific explosion which occurred on the right half of LT 2/24's sector, covering the entire island with a dense cloud of pungent smoke which at first was thought to be gas. Fragments of concrete, steel, wood, shrapnel and torpedo heads rained down over the surrounding area and caused a considerable number of casualties. This explosion and two others somewhat less violent are thought to have caused well over 50% of the casualties suffered by LT 2/24.

The cause of the explosion will probably never be known, but it seems worth while to give here what amounts to not much more than rumor. The blockhouse which was actually a storehouse for torpedoes and heavy ammunition looked much like any other that had proved to be sheltering troops. A demolition team was hacking away at it, some on the roof, some at the door. The party at the door finally succeeded in making an opening and revealing the deadly contents within. One or two men rushed a few yards to the rear to warn their comrades above to lay off. Just at this moment an opening was made in the roof and a grenade dropped in before the signals of alarm could be heeded.

It is possible, however, that the Japanese blew up the place themselves as it is known that the later explosions were not caused by our own troops. Whatever the cause, the result brought death to many brave men. Meanwhile, units of LT 3/24 reached the O-1, which, for our purposes may be called Sycamore Road, by 1400 and waited on that line for further orders. Tanks and half tracks had gradually been put ashore with some difficulty due to operational failures and conditions of terrain. A mortar platoon and a platoon of the Regimental Weapons Company were landed and proceeded to the northern tip of the peninsula separating Namur from Roi with orders to support the attack.

At 1630 LT 3/24 jumped off and immediately encountered moderate resistance. The vast amount of debris from the ruined buildings and strong points which had not yet been put out of action gave the enemy ample opportunities for effective machine gun fire. In addition enemy rifle and grenade fire made progress extremely slow.

LT 2/24 had not jumped off till 1730 because of the late arrival of their tanks and found the going equally hard.

By 1930 LT 3/24 had two companies abreast on a line about 175 yards north of O-1 and LT 2/24's line was abreast for a short distance and then slanted gradually southeastward to O-1 on the eastern shore of the island. At this time all units were ordered to establish a perimeter defense, to hold the ground gained and prepare to renew the attack in the morning. Naturally, it had been hoped that the entire objective could be gained in a single day, but when this had become obviously impossible, orders to halt the attack might well have been given earlier than at a time when only half an hour of daylight remained. When the order came to dig in front lines were left ragged, some units pulled back in an effort to straighten the lines, leaving other units isolated. Contact between adjacent units was lost in some instances, and other units were uncertain as to who was to their front, flank or rear with the result that complete coordination of defensive fire was impossible. Some units could not fire

with the certainty that friendly troops would not be hit. Had a strong enemy counterattack been directed that night at certain points it might have proved costly. Considerable firing occurred during the night from rear areas due to some of the men being "trigger happy." On the right of the perimeter also the Japs infiltrated or came out of underground shelters and trenches and opened fire on the troops from positions thought to be free of hostile resistance. To a somewhat lesser extent the same conditions prevailed in the area of LT 3/24.

At daybreak, 2 February (D-day plus 2) counterattacks were made by small groups of the enemy before the lines of 3/24. Probably a hundred men altogether in units of ten or twenty charged fanatically upon our emplacements for something like thirty-five minutes. The sacrifice was futile; in fact, the Company which took the brunt of the attacks had gained some ground at their cessation.

During this time plans had been formulated for a continuation of the attack at 0900. Due to the condition of the terrain--an indescribable mass of debris--certain of the Companies had become intermingled and some uncertainty arose as to the position of others. Nevertheless, considering conditions the situation could have been described as in hand.

At 0900 LT 3/24 resumed the attack with three companies abreast supported by medium tanks. These proved of limited use due to the unsuitability of the terrain, but by 1215 the northwestern extremities of the island had been secured.

In the right sector the attack was not launched until 1000 due to delay in the light tanks reaching the Line of Departure. Elements of LT 1/24 and LT 2/24 combined under the Commanding Officer of LT 1/24 took up the front line leaving the elements of LT 2/24 which were not in the front line to support the attack and mop up the rear areas. Again, three companies abreast followed the beach line and made excellent progress. By 1100 the encircling movement of LT's 1/24 and 2/24 had made it possible to establish visual contact with the extreme left of the line of advance of LT 3/24. Tanks were then withdrawn but half tracks continued to support the infantry. By 1215 the end of the island was reached and organized resistance ceased.

This brief and fragmentary account of wiping out the last Japanese resistance can convey no proper idea of the difficulties and desperation of the fighting. It is possible that details exist in official reports that are not yet to hand, but only eye-witness accounts can, at the moment, supplement what is now available. However, it seems pretty certain that the success of the attack launched by Companies "A" and "C" was due in great measure to the intrepidity of

the Commanding Officer of 1/24, Lieutenant Colonel Aquilla James Dyess, who led the advance in person. Whenever the attack was slowed by heavy enemy fire he placed himself at the head of his men and inspired them to push forward. By 1040 the battle was almost done. At 1045, while standing on the parapet of an anti-tank ditch directing a flanking attack against the last enemy position, he was killed by a burst of machine gun fire.

It is a deep source of pride to all members of the Marine Corps that Lieutenant Colonel Dyess was awarded, posthumously, the Medal of Honor.

It would seem as if our language, perhaps through abuse of words which originally held great meaning, is now thwarted in its effort to describe deeds of gallantry which stand for the highest motives in human nature, the unhesitating sacrifice of one's life for one's comrades. 1st Lieutenant John V. Power performed such a deed. While attacking a pillbox on Namur about 75 yards from the beach he was wounded in the stomach while placing a charge. Despite the wound he continued on to a second pillbox which he blew up with a satchel charge. Following the explosion he charged alone to the pillbox entrance, holding his stomach wound with his left hand and his carbine in his right. Upon entering the door of the pillbox he emptied his carbine within. While reloading he was shot and killed. The posthumous award of the Medal of Honor will help to keep his memory green.

It was not until the close of the following day, however, that the mopping up units had eliminated the numerous snipers who had been concealed in isolated spots.

While the tanks had been of considerable assistance in instilling confidence in the infantry, the full effect of their attacks was not driven home. In some instances tanks rushed through the infantry lines to execute missions which were not coordinated with those of the infantry they were supposed to be supporting. Radio communication with them was impossible because of interference and in many instances it was difficult to persuade crews to "unbutton" long enough to receive instructions. In a number of cases also, infantry failed to follow tanks closely enough to protect them from enemy attack due partly to their speed which made it impossible to keep up with them over the torn up ground. It was evident afterwards that more training in this intricate team work was necessary.

Enemy resistance from the first had been disorganized. Before the landings the annihilating effect of the bombardment had killed very large numbers of the defending forces--estimates are 50/60 percent--and the remaining troops were shell shocked and half mad from exhaustion and lack of food

and water. They resisted, however, with the utmost bravery and stubborness and died at their posts almost to the last man. Communications had been completely knocked out and resistance took the form of sniping from every possible place of concealment in the rubble and by occasional concerted charges of small numbers of men who were cut down as they rushed madly forward. During the night of February 1-2 the enemy tried infiltration tactics which were counteracted and in large measure vitiated by star shell illumination from ships placed at appropriate stations to give this fire at certain regular intervals or on call.

Mopping up--a term which is greatly abused--remained to be done. Some of the buildings were interconnected and the blocked entrance of one did not necessarily insure that the enemy within were definitely trapped. It was necessary, therefore, to approach each ruin with the utmost caution to avoid an enemy bullet even though it might be his last, and to use flame throwers and satchel charges with determination and in quantity.

The Commanding General, 4th Marine Division, had assumed command ashore at 1820 1 February. At 0800 on 2 February Phase III of the operation began. This consisted of the search and seizure of the islands immediately to the south of Namur, the last being Gagen which marked the separation of the north and south sectors. At about the same time, the island of Boggerlapp to the west of Mellu was seized.

BLT 3/25 continued working from LVT's in a westerly direction and by 5 February reached Oniotto. Similar work continued through 6 and 7 February during which time the relatively large island, Ebadon, at the extreme west of the atoll was reached. The Southern Landing Force had undertaken similar maneuvers so that on 7 February the work was pretty much finished.

At 0730 8 February 1944, the Commander, Central Pacific Forces announced that the capture and occupation phase had been completed. At 0800 command of the Kwajalein Garrison Force was assumed by Rear Admiral A. D. Bernhard, USN. In immediate command of Roi-Namur was Captain E. C. Ewen,USN, and of Kwajalein Island, Brigadier General H. D. Gibson, USA.

The enemy casualties amounted to almost their entire garrison.

Killed in action	3472
Japanese prisoners.	99
Korean prisoners	165
Total	3736

Marine Corps losses:

Killed in action	190
Wounded in action	547
Total	737

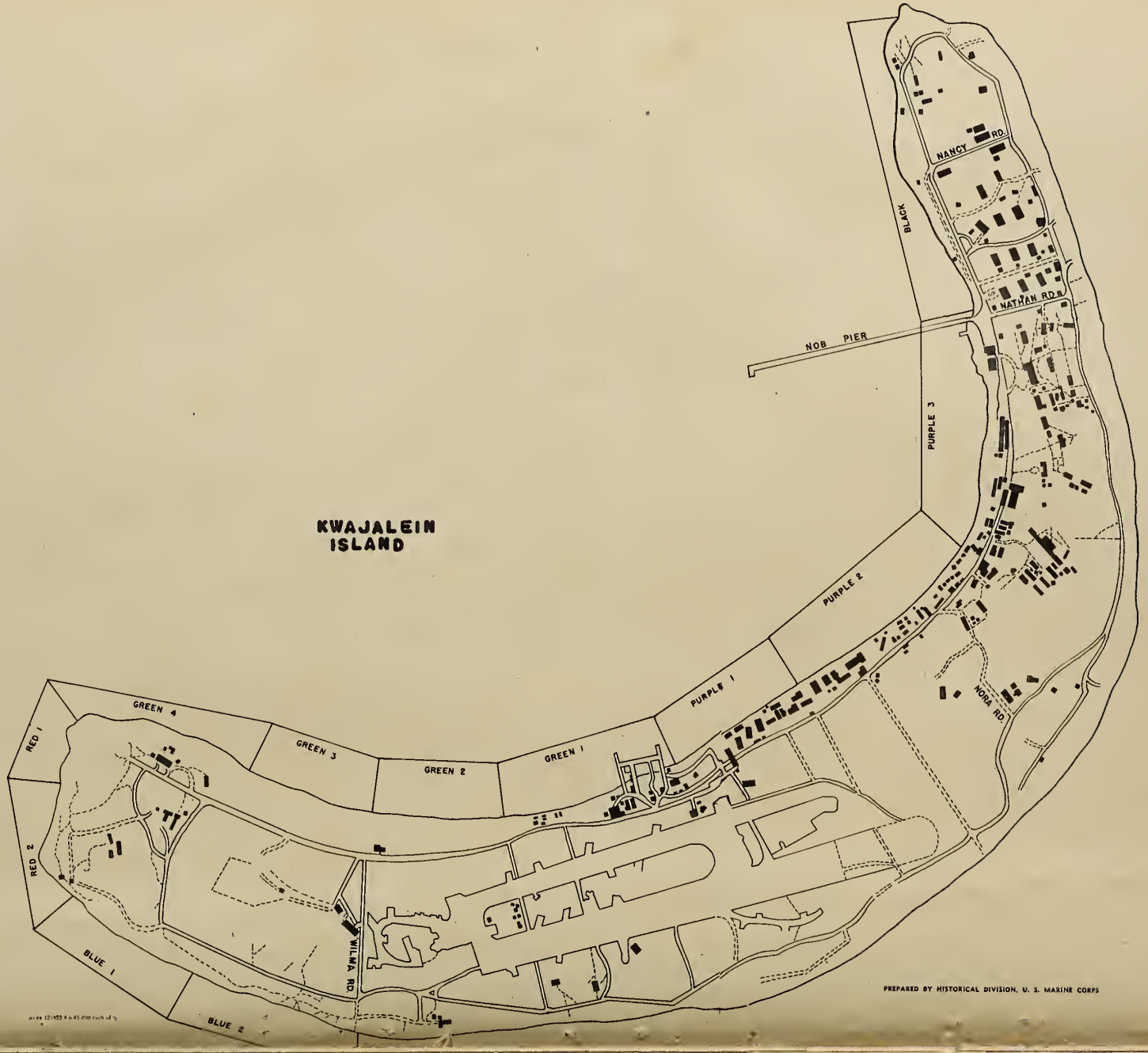
The burial of the enemy dead presented a problem of the utmost importance to sanitation. Beside the runways of the airfield on Roi were drainage trenches. They were deepened by bulldozers and the bodies of the fanatical defenders disposed in them with dignity despite the need for haste. Commander W. C. Baty (MC) USN, the Division Surgeon was commended by the Commanding General for his skillful and rapid execution of this distasteful but essential task.

Despite some things going wrong, chiefly the lack of control over the LVT's, the operation was brilliantly successful. It seems doubtful if more could have been accomplished in a shorter time and with less casualties. As compared to the assault on Tarawa the operation had a number of factors in its favor.

1. There was more time available for planning.
2. The lessons learned had been taken to heart.
3. There was more appreciation of the problems involved in sending troops over reefs in amphibious tractors, (which, again, had been gained by experience).
4. There was more equipment available.

On the other hand, naturally enough, the bitter experience at Tarawa was still fresh in the minds of the high command and there was perhaps overemphasis of certain problems which the earlier engagement had established in the minds of those concerned. This caused in the beginning, general doubt regarding the effectiveness of our weapons and our tactics, but this doubt was rapidly dissolved. As an observer of the operation put it, "A continuation of the policy to send a man to do a boy's job will result in rapid success with relatively small cost in casualties."

Official reports now at hand are in many instances lacking in sufficient detail to give an accurate account here of difficulties incurred in the taking of Namur. The 7th Infantry Division, constituting the Southern Landing Force was, however, better provided and the reader is referred to six articles by Lieutenant Colonel S. L. A. Marshall which appeared in the INFANTRY JOURNAL serially from August 1944 to January 1945 inclusive, and were later published in book form under the title of "Island Victory." These articles, written as the result of what might be called a general seminar of both officers and men after the fighting had ceased on Kwajalein Island, served to bring out in great detail the difficulties


KWAJALEIN
ISLAND
BLACK
NANCY RD.
NATHAN RD.
NOB PIER
PURPLE 3
PURPLE 2
PURPLE 1
NORA RD.
GREEN 4
GREEN 3
GREEN 2
GREEN 1
RED 1
RED 2
BLUE 1
BLUE 2
WILMA RD.
PREPARED BY HISTORICAL DIVISION, U. S. MARINE CORPS

and tribulations which the 184th and the 32d Infantry, U. S. Army incurred in gaining their hard won objective. It is to be regretted that there is nothing comparable to it for the Northern Landing Force.

SECTION V

KWAJALEIN ATOLL

Southern Attack Force

It now becomes necessary to turn to the Southern Attack Force which was engaged in the seizure of Kwajalein Island.

Enemy forces on Kwajalein Island had been estimated at 3500-4200 troops plus 1200-1600 Korean laborers. Ebeye to the north was thought to hold 700-900 men.

The plan of attack was similar to that of the Northern forces; that is, on D-day (31 January 1944) it was planned to seize and emplace artillery on Enubuj and Ennylabegan Islands to support the landings on Kwajalein Island destined for the following day.

The 7th Division Reconnaissance Troop was to land prior to dawn and secure Gea and Ninni Islands in order to gain mastery of Ninni Pass between the two. The operation was accomplished successfully except that a landing was made in error because of the darkness on Gehh Island, about 2000 yards to the north of Ninni. The detachment was reembarked, reached its proper destination and secured Ninni by 1235. Gea was captured at 0935.

No enemy had been found on Gehh when the troops reembarked for the Ninni landing. This proved unlucky for at a later time in the operation, it was necessary to retake the island to which some of the enemy had managed to make their way. In its second capture, 65 Japanese were killed.[1]

Ninni was secured without opposition and Gea taken at a loss to us of 1 killed and 1 injured against 13 enemy killed.

Landings on Ennylabegan were made on the northern end from the seaward side about 0912 by BLT 1/17 and the island was secured by 1310. Meanwhile, BLT 2/17 had gone for Enubuj at 0915 and, with the assistance of light tanks which were put ashore an hour or so later, secured the island by 1210.

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[1] Reports vary as to the number.

Immediately afterward, the artillery of the 7th Division began to be landed. The 31st, 48th, and 57th Field Artillery Battalions (105 Howitzers) were put ashore in DUKW's by 1500. Two batteries of the 145th Artillery Battalion of 155mm were landed in LCM's by 1700. During the night of 31 January- 1 February, all guns were registered and ready to fire before daylight. Harassing fire by the artillery and by naval gunfire was put down on Kwajalein throughout the night. LCI's standing close in prevented the enemy from moving to other adjoining islands. By 1735 31 January, all troops of RCT's 184 and 32, which were to be landed in LVT's, had been transferred to LST's.

Phase II began early on 1 February. The plan called for landing at 0930 of the two RCT's 184 and 32 in column of battalions abreast on beaches Red 1 and Red 2 on the western end of the island.

The previous day on two occasions, Beach Reconnaissance Unit #1 had reconnoitred the beaches for underwater obstacles or mines with negative results. W-hour, D-day plus 1, was set for 0930. Naval gunfire began at 0615 just as dawn was coming in. This continued in heavy volume until it was halted to allow for air bombardment. The carrier planes went to work from 0805 until 0830; then for a period of nine minutes beginning at 0830 six land-based bombers from Makin did their bit in making things miserable for the enemy.

The carrier planes then took up again, dive-bombing the landing beaches from 0845-0900 and strafing from 0900-0905. At the end of the air bombardment, intense naval gunfire was resumed.

The first waves of BLT's 3/184 and 1/32 crossed the Line of Departure at 0900 in LVT's. They were supported by LCI's on the flanks and by a group of 17 LVT(A)'s armed with 37mm cannon and manned by Company "A" of the 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion. The handling of the landing craft and their supports was admirable.

Initial opposition at the beach was light and by 0955 it was found possible to land tanks. Their advent heartened the troops despite their difficulty in negotiating the hideously shell-torn terrain. Four waves came in direct in LVT's and the 5th and 6th were transferred to them from LCVP's outside the reef and made the landing in two stages.

By 1018, RCT 32 on the right was 250 yards inland and by 1300 troops were approaching the western end of the air strip, about 1000 yards from Beaches Red 1 and 2. At 1438, BLT 2/32 passed through 1/32 which had led the advance for five hours.

By 1700, our troops were about a third of the way up the island. Regimental CP's of 32 and 184 had been established

Line 2: Add "49th"

ashore near the beaches by 1800. The CP, 7th Division, was established on Enubuj about 1700.

BLT 3/184 set up a front line for the night at a point 300 yards west of Center Pier. BLT 2/32 on its right was 200 yards ahead. At 2245, the enemy counterattacked on the 184th lines in groups of about 50 men each. There was considerable tensity for no one could be quite sure who was friend or foe, but the attacks, for the most part mad and suicidal rushes, were repulsed with almost complete casualties to the enemy. Moreover, searchlights from ships on selected stations served to prevent extensive concentrations without the movement being revealed.

It must be recalled that the shock of the naval bombardment for three successive days, and the destructive harassment of artillery and air concentrations had left the enemy in a state bordering on insane despair. As an officer observer afterwards put it, "The entire island (Kwajalein) looked as if it had been picked up to twenty-thousand feet and then dropped. All beach defenses were completely destroyed."

On D-day plus 2 (2 February) at 0630, BLT 2/184 passed through 3/184 and joined 2/32 in an attack at 0715. The jump off was preceded by air bombardment and naval gunfire and was supported by tanks. Progress was slow but steady; resistance was spotty but heavy in certain places.

At 1200, BLT 3/32 passed through 2/32 and continued the attack. By dusk (about 1930) the leading 2/184 and 3/32 Battalions had established their front lines and set up a perimeter defense. The line of 3/32 was generally along Nora Road with 2/184 about 100 yards ahead. Resistance had been stubborn especially on the seaward side of the island. Meanwhile, the 7th Reconnaissance Troop had relanded on Gehh (which had been found untenanted on 31 January when first approached) and had killed 65 men and captured 2 prisoners at a loss to themselves of 2 killed and 11 wounded.

During the night of 2-3 February, 1/184 had relieved 2/184 in their sector.

On D-day plus 3 (3 February), the two battalions jumped off abreast at 0715. Resistance during the day was continually stiffer as the enemy took advantage of every possible uncertainty of the terrain and concentrated the fire of such mortars and artillery as were left to them. Despite the havoc wrought by the bombardments, there was still much cover available and positions were concealed with great adroitness. Many of the concrete installations still stood in partial ruin even though they had received direct hits from heavy naval guns and the fire from 75mm's had little effect on them.

It was necessary to employ heavy demolition charges to breach emplacements sufficiently for the employment of flame throwers and grenades.

In the utter turmoil, it was nearly impossible to maintain contact. Nothing was any longer recognizable. The situation was made doubly uncertain from the fact that fire might come from almost any direction at the flanks, frontally or from the rear. The going was tough.

At 1407, RCT 32 had pushed up to Nathan Road abreast of NOB pier. It became evident that the battle would not end that day. In consequence, RCT 184 was ordered to wheel to the left toward the lagoon where a considerable number of the enemy were still concentrated. Just above Nathan Road, RCT 184 was pinched off by RCT 32 which took over the entire front, at that point something over 300 yards in width.

Ebeye -- As the Japanese resistance had become longer drawn out than had been hoped, it was determined to commit certain of the reserves to the capture of Ebeye. At 0934, D-day plus 3 (3 February), BLT 1/17 was landed on Beach Orange 4, on the south end of the island, supported by heavy air and naval bombardment. There, like devastation to Kwajalein confronted the troops, and resistance of the same desperate character made itself felt immediately. At 1600, therefore, BLT 3/17 was landed in support. By dusk about half of the island had been taken and the two tiny islets to the south between Ebeye and Kwajalein had been cleared of enemy.

At 0700, on D-day plus 4 (4 February) the enemy attacked in some concentration but made no appreciable progress. The blockhouses, however, proved extremely difficult to silence. At about 1130 3/17 passed through 1/17 and continued the slow but steady advance. By 1255, organized resistance--such as it was--ceased and mopping up was completed by 1337.

Meanwhile, on Kwajalein itself the struggle continued but with lessening fury as the Japanese were gradually cut down. At dawn (0600) on D-day plus 4 (4 February) 1/184 and 2/184 launched an attack to clean up the remaining forces in the vicinity of NOB pier. By 0852, organized resistance ceased and by 1200 NOB pier had been secured though only after a hard struggle.

On the lines to the north the enemy had made a counter-attack at 0509 which got nowhere. BLT's 2/32 and 1/32 then passed through 3/32 to continue the attack, leaving 3/32 for the mopping up operations.

After naval gunfire on the northern tip of the island, 2/32 jumped off at 0715. It was still the same hard going,

discouraging and desolate despite the sense of gradual accomplishment of a ruthless task. By 1132, 2/32 had advanced to Nancy Road about 400 yards from the end of the island, and somewhat less than the distance covered since early morning. At 1450, 1/32 took the lead, and at last gained the certainty after so many earlier disappointments that the enemy's struggles were nearly over. Kwajalein Island had produced a war of its own.

Isolated Engagements on D-day plus 5 -- Meanwhile, a detachment of 2/17 landed on the small island of Loi to the north of Ebeye and secured it after small resistance. Artillery was landed to support the attack on Gugegwe set for 5 February.

Prior to dawn on D-day plus 5 (5 February), the 7th Reconnaissance Troop landed by rubber boats on the north end of Bigej, next to the north and across the channel from Gugegwe. The enemy was first encountered at 0722 and put up strong resistance from pillboxes and dug in positions. BLT 3/184, which was in reserve off Gugegwe in two LST's, was ordered to land during the middle of the morning. Tanks were put ashore at 1123. The Reconnaissance Troop advanced behind them down the island to the northern pier, methodically reducing the enemy positions. The 3/184 then passed through the Reconnaissance Troop, continued the attack, and secured Bigej by 1545.

Earlier in the day, BLT 1/17 had landed from LST's on Center Gugegwe at 0932 against light resistance. By 1520 the central portion was secured and the troops passed over the reef to north Gugegwe which in turn was in their hands at 1711.

The squeezing out of possible enemy on the smaller islands to the north and to the west of Kwajalein was carried on systematically throughout D-day plus 5 (5 February). At daylight BLT 2/17 sent one reinforced rifle company in an LST supported by an LCI to clear the islands to the west of Gehh and up to Eller, the northernmost island on the western side of the lagoon within the southern sector. Similar forces went northward on the eastern shores from Bigej to Gellinam. A few enemy were accounted for.

By 0800, 5 February, Rear Admiral A. D. Bernhard, Advanced Base Commander of Kwajalein Atoll, had established his command post ashore and was preparing to assume command when Commander, Central Pacific Force (Vice Admiral R. A. Spruance) had declared the capture and occupation phases were complete. On 8 February this declaration was made. Captain E. C. Ewen, USN, and Brigadier General H. D. Gibson, USA, became commanders of Roi-Namur and Kwajalein Islands Areas respectively.

SECTION VI

Handling of the LVT's

The foregoing brief accounts of the land actions of the Northern and Southern Forces can hardly give an idea of the dangers and difficulties with which the troops were confronted. It is true that the operation was completed rapidly and the men neither were faced with the terrible discomforts of jungle fighting nor with the prospect of a battle of almost indefinite duration such as occurred later in the seizure of the Marianas. Still while it lasted the fighting was bitter as any yet encountered. The enemy's control over their forces was lost by the shattering of communications and only occasionally were they able to rally as much as fifty men for some form of concerted attack. Most of them were killed in individual combat and literally they died to the last man. The number of enemy troops engaged in the defense of Kwajalein Atoll was estimated as nearly correctly as possible by the number who were buried.

It now seems proper to consider in somewhat more detail different elements of the action. As before consideration will be given first to the Northern Landing Force and then to the Southern.

As regards the boating of the Marine Corps units and the handling of the LVT's, there is no question of the superior cohesion of small craft transportation in the Southern Landing Force.

In that delightful book called "Uncommon Law", by A. P. Herbert, the well known British wit and Member of Parliament, pokes fun at the laws of his land. Among others he touches on a case where a man driving along a flooded road in an automobile, was forced into deep water, to the ruin of his car, by a man paddling a boat of light draft, who insisted upon observing the "Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea" and in passing the automobile on the port side. The question involved--a tricky one--was what law should apply; the Admiralty Laws governing navigation or the general rules of the road.

It would seem that much the same circumstances existed here. What is an LVT? The Navy wished to hold that it was a naval vessel and as such subject to their command. Yet, it was manned by a Marine Corps crew and was destined to go on land as well as water. At what moment, therefore, should it, as a vessel, leave naval control and become a vehicle subject to Marine Corps orders? This question, a grave one in time of stress, was certainly not satisfactorily settled during the landings on Roi and Namur.

It must be admitted that the difficulties were very considerable and that more was expected of the amphibians than they could reasonably be supposed to accomplish. To review the situation briefly: on D-day, 31 January, landings were to be made on Ennuebing and Mellu Islands on the former of which, after both had been secured, artillery was to be landed to support the attacks on Roi and Namur. As soon as the islands had been secured it was planned that the LVT's should immediately retract, pick up other troops in the LST area outside the reef and returning through Ennuebing Pass proceed across the north end of the lagoon to capture Ennubirr and Ennumennet Islands. If time permitted, Ennugarret, immediately to the southeast of Namur, was also to be seized.

In later operations much of this confusion was avoided by transferring the troops from transports to LST's well prior to the proposed hour of landings on D-day and launching the fully loaded LVT's from their carriers. Another element which complicated the situation was the fact that the control boats appeared to be somewhat uncertain of their duties in regard to shepherding the LVT's. It does not appear that the limitations of the latter craft (or vehicle if you prefer) were thoroughly understood. Also the crews of the LST's and the LVT's were new to each other and the former do not appear to have exercised or to have held a sympathetic and understanding outlook as to what their little brood required. As an instance, the commanding officer of one platoon exhibits remarkable restraint in his account:

> "The tractor crews had only been able to get very few hours rest (D plus 3). By this time they were acutely suffering from fatigue, but LST _____ refused to give the men any hot chow or coffee when we returned for refuelling and later in the operation even refused the men the use of their heads."

Another case:

> "Upon reaching LST_____they requested permission to come aboard telling the ship's Captain two of the LVT's were about out of gas and having motor trouble. He refused permission to the men to come aboard saying that he had been ordered to anchorage within the lagoon. The LVT's tried to follow but two which had been low on gas ran out and sank."

The craft and their crews were driven beyond limits of endurance of men and machines. Continuous operation was more than they could stand.

From Headquarters, 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion:

> "A man can be overworked, rested and used again readily; a machine gives only so much and then stops. No consideration was given the need for servicing vehicles. Demands for machines usually were on a par with available running equipment. Units had time only to refuel and keep operating. Oil couldn't be changed or normal levels maintained, greasing was completely out. Personnel employing tractor units must be made aware of this need for service if they are to have vehicles operating more than a few days."

Again the Medical Officer comments:

> "Fatigue: It is estimated that about 75% of the personnel of this organization operated tractors for 24 to 30 of the first 48 hours of the recent Kwajalein invasion. Continuous operation of tractors for 14 to 16 hours was not uncommon and several platoons participated in assaults on three separate islands in one day."

And in a summary he says:

> "By far the most important problems and the one most urgently requiring the attention of all officers is that of fatigue."

Had there been at the beaches the same desperate opposition that had flashed up at Tarawa, it is possible that things might have gone amiss. It seems probable that much of the confusion could have been averted had there been time for more rehearsal. And, as it was, the job managed to get done. However, the loss of precious tractors was not inconsiderable, 36 out of 140 employed or something over 25%. Of these 23 were sunk, 7 were missing and listed as probably sunk and 6 were swamped or overturned on reefs. Three of these went down in endeavoring to land the artillery, with a loss of seven men and two 75mm Pack Howitzers.

The Southern Landing Force somehow managed to overcome most of the difficulties which have been noted above in the handling of their LVT's. The 7th Infantry Division so organized its amphibian tractor units that it was able to retain better operational control and maintenance. As amphibian tractor units were not available, the 7th Infantry Division converted well trained tank units into a seagoing force. This worked surprisingly well. Under the 708th Provisional Amphibious Tractor Battalion four LVT groups were organized. Each group consisted of 34 LVT's and was designated to land the first four waves of one Battalion Landing Team.

One such group was assigned to two LST's, each LST being able to load 17 LVT's on the tank deck. The assignment of the LVT groups to the LST's was permanent for the duration of the operation, both for movement overseas and throughout the initial and subsequent landings. This permanent assignment of LVT groups to specific LST's contributed to a high degree to the success of their operation and maintenance. For each group of LVT's one of the LST's was equipped as a maintenance shop. After each landing LVT's were returned and reloaded in their assigned LST's for servicing.

After the capture and occupation of Ennylabegan, that island was used as an LVT base throughout the remainder of the operation and LVT's which could not immediately be repaired on the LST's were landed there for heavy repairs. LST's assigned to the LVT groups when not involved in other operations normally anchored in the lagoon off the Ennylabegan shore. Within each LVT group, one LVT was employed solely for emergency maintenance and repair. It operated between the Line of Departure and the beach and rendered immediate assistance to any craft whose mechanical difficulties its own crew was unable to rectify.

For the purposes of coordination and command, the Commander of Amphibious Tractor Battalion had his CP in the flagship of the Transport Group Commander. The executive officer's CP was in the flagship of the LST Group Commander. By this arrangement the LVT commander maintained close, direct and personal contact with the troop and naval commanders with whom he had to work.

During the ship to shore movements the LVT battalion commander moved to the Line of Departure and remained on or in the vicinity of the control vessel from which he could observe and supervise the operation of his LVT groups.

The 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion executed five separate landings precisely on schedule. No LVT's were swamped or lost in the surf but two were lost as a result of an attempt to tow them at a speed in excess of 10 knots. All of the groups operated at full strength throughout.

One company of LVT(A)1's was employed in the operation. It consisted of 15 vehicles organized into three platoons of five amphibian tanks each. The entire company was embarked in a single LST which served as its home throughout the operation in similar fashion to the LVT's. The amphibious tanks were employed to accompany and support the first wave with positions on the flanks and in the center. This was a new idea in amphibious landings and without a doubt a good one, but it is difficult to assess its absolute value because of the lack of enemy opposition encountered on the beaches.

DUKW's were used by the 7th Infantry Division for two principal purposes: (1) to land artillery and its ammunition from its LST's and (2) to land priority supplies. Four battalions of field artillery, 105mm Howitzers were embarked in four LST's. The artillery pieces and additional supplies of ammunition were loaded into the DUKW's which in turn were stowed on the tank deck of the LST. As soon as the beach was seized on Ennylabegan Island the artillery was ordered to land and the LST's closed in to within a short distance of the beach and launched their DUKW's. By the use of "A" frames with which a certain proportion of the DUKW's were equipped the artillery pieces were lifted out at the sites selected for emplacement. The tactical situation required the landing of large quantities of artillery ammunition. To accomplish this the LST's were beached and the DUKW's employed to shuttle between the ships and ammunition dumps further inland. For the purpose employed they proved admirable and their mechanical functioning was satisfactory. They were not, however, so successfully used in inter-island traffic because of their low speed and lack of sea-worthiness.

SECTION VII

Naval, Air and Artillery Bombardment

It seems probable that the lessons at Tarawa in attempted neutralization of enemy beach defenses were foremost in the minds of the high command and the determination was arrived at that so long as there were ample forces available they would be employed to the fullest.

From D-day minus 2, until our troops were so firmly established ashore that only call fire was possible, Battleships, Cruisers, Destroyers and LCI's poured forth a crushing weight of shell upon the enemy installations. It was believed, not unreasonably, that the fortifications might possibly equal those of Betio Island and that every possible endeavor should be made to reduce them, before the troops were sent ashore. In consequence, vast quantities of shell of all weights were thrown at the different islands with almost completely devastating result. None of the islands adjoining the principal objectives of both the Northern and the Southern Landing Forces escaped this rain of fire. In the north, Ennugarret, Ennumennet; Ennubirr on the east and Mellu on the west of the lagoon, all received thorough and continuous going over. On Roi, 1434.5 tons were fired and on Namur 1220.6 tons. In the Southern Group, Bigej, Gugegwe, Loi and Ebeye on the east of the lagoon were heavily pounded and on the west Ennubuj and Ennylabegan received their due share. On Kwajalein itself 2656.5 tons were fired. The following table by size of gun and number of rounds fired

can only give but small indication of the almost annihilating effect of the naval bombardment.

Northern Group		Southern Group		
Bore	Rounds	Bore	Rounds	Totals
16"	1527	16"	1022	2549
14"	783	14"	3483	4266
8"	1400	8"	2895	4295
6"	3337	6"	--	3337
5"	21212	5"	27668	48880
	2677.4		3926.7	

This fire was delivered from the following ships:

Northern Force:

BB's: North Carolina, Alabama, South Dakota, Tennessee, Colorado, Maryland.

Heavy Cruisers: Louisville, Indianapolis.

Light Cruisers: Santa Fe, Mobile, Biloxi.

11 Destroyers

Southern Force:

BB's: Washington, Indiana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Idaho, New Mexico, Mississippi.

Heavy Cruisers: Minneapolis, San Francisco, New Orleans.

18 Destroyers

In addition the LCI's formed on the flanks of the boat waves and going close in discharged rocket and machine gun fire which would have had shattering effect on the enemy had the beach defenses been manned in force. This again was a new idea and again a good one. But, as in the case of the LVT(A)1's it was not possible here to make a calculated estimate of the beneficial result.

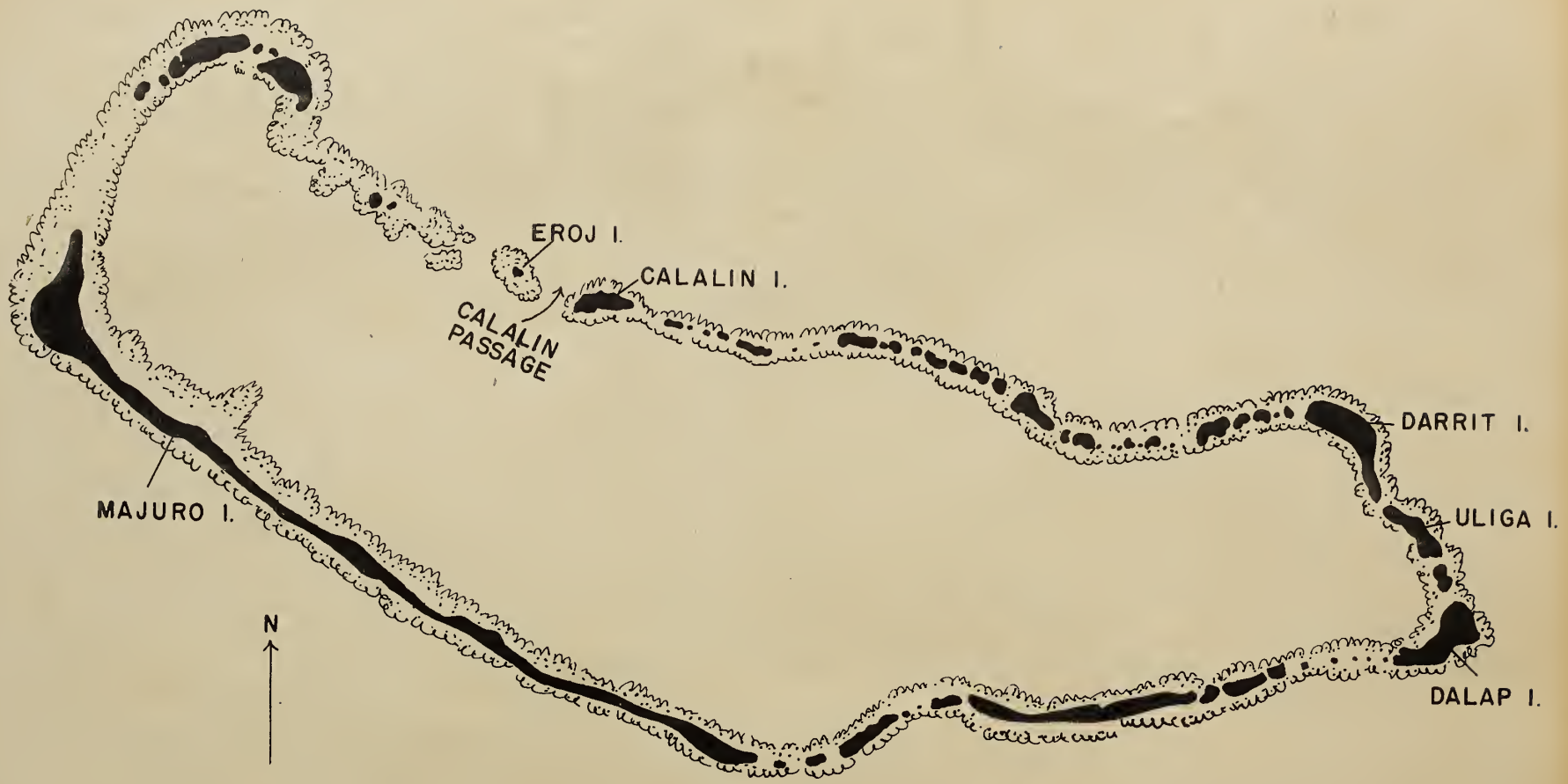
As regards artillery fire from registered emplacements on islands adjoining the principal objectives the results were highly satisfactory. This again, was a successful tactical departure. Ground troops like to be supported by their own artillery. From Ennylabegan the 105mm Howitzers discharged 73175 rounds from D-day until their services were

no longer required and the 155mm's, 5236; a total of 78411 rounds. The forty-eight 105mm Howitzers fired almost continuously for three days and two nights from an area 150 yards wide by 900 yards long and discharged during this time 1622 tons of ammunition. The strain on the personnel was almost beyond endurance but they held up splendidly. The 155mm Howitzers which were in position 200 yards to the rear of the 105mm Howitzers' area also fired day and night from D-day plus 1 to the morning of D-day plus 5.

A terrible and disconcerting accident failed to diminish the accuracy and rapidity of their fire. Early on D-day plus 3 seven men were killed by a premature burst and the blowing up of one of the 155mm Howitzers. Despite the fact that no one knew the cause or felt in his heart that it was unlikely to reoccur, all personnel continued to fire with the greatest hardihood and enthusiasm. The greatest strain fell on the loaders who moved by hand 4/5 of a ton of metal in each ten minutes of firing. Casualties in the artillery were as follows:

	Officers	Enlisted
Dead from enemy action:	1	2
Dead from own equipment:	1	7
Wounded from enemy action:	1	7
Wounded from own equipment:	0	26
Total	3	42

It may be wondered that with this intense and continuous bombardment none of our own troops or vessels were hit. The smoke arising from the fires of burning buildings, the dust raised up by the crushing burst of shells, served to obscure positions on the islands and make observation even from the air extremely difficult. It is due to this factor that in the opinion of certain naval officers call fire was not utilized to its fullest possible extent. In close-in support such as even the largest naval vessels were giving at point-blank range it was sometimes possible to observe through glasses, movements of the enemy which were either not seen or could not be properly interpreted by observers ashore. Fire on such targets of opportunity might have added more rapidly to the confusion of the enemy. There were times, however, when frantic troop commanders falsely accused naval gunfire of landing in our own lines. Some of these cases arose when ships were not firing and the very rumor of the report served somewhat to lower the ship's morale. The chances are that the Japanese, with their customary ingenuity were shooting over our troops with mortars to make them think that our own fire was falling in rear areas.



MAJURO ATOLL

- SCALE -

5000 0 5000 yds.

PREPARED BY HISTORICAL DIVISION, U. S. MARINE CORPS

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The Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, in reviewing observers comments makes, however, an interesting statement, "The dependence on a rolling artillery barrage for advance has not been concurred in. It is envisaged that in many cases such a barrage will be impossible and troops should not be taught to depend upon the artillery to clear the way."

Observation of artillery fire from planes was a marked success, with certain minor difficulties which, it was recognized, could be overcome in future operations. This was the third good idea which was put into practice for the first time.

The capture of Kwajalein Atoll could never have been completed so rapidly had it not been for the elimination of the enemy's air strength. For a month previous to the operation the airfields on the principal Marshall Atolls had received a thorough going over from land based planes. The Japs are hard to discourage, however, with the consequence that fields which had been put out frequently refused to stay put. It was left to the Carriers, therefore, before the assault to prevent effectively all interference with the landing forces from the air. Before these attacks began, on D-day minus 2, all airborne opposition had been squashed. Twenty-one enemy planes had been destroyed in the air and sixty-two on the ground. Our own losses were five planes in combat and three in operation. Four pilots and one member of a crew were killed.

The sorties (one complete attack by one aircraft) for all purposes totalled 1704. Thirteen hundred and seventy-nine bombs totalling tons 274.5 were dropped.

269.035 rounds 50 calibre and 3440 rounds 30 calibre were expended.

No description can surpass the cold facts regarding our mastery in the air.

SECTION VIII

MAJURO

The importance of the early seizure of Majuro for use as an advanced naval base and harbor had been realized since the start of planning for the Marshall Islands operations.

A glance at the map of the Marshalls will show that Majuro Atoll lies in the eastern portion of the group and in the heart of the more important atolls which for the time being were to be by-passed. This map will show, too, the gradual change in complexion which has come over this

particular family of islands in the Pacific. With the exception of four, all the other atolls are now in American hands.

The Majuro lagoon is about 24 miles long by 5 miles wide and extends generally east and west. On the north and west there are long stretches of reef devoid of islands. Most of the south side of the atoll consists of Majuro Island which curves snakelike for 21 miles with a width of 2/300 yards until the head widens out toward the extreme west.

The other important islands, all at the eastern end of the lagoon are Dalap, immediately east of Majuro, and Uliga and Darrit in line to the north of Dalap. All have heavy vegetation. The entrance to the lagoon is on the northern side something over half way to the westward, flanked by the island of Calalin and the islet of Eroj.

The mission to seize Majuro Atoll was assigned to Task Group 51.2 under the command of Rear Admiral H. W. Hill. The assault landing force consisted of the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, reinforced by the Reconnaissance Company, V Amphibious Corps and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel F. H. Sheldon, USA.

The fire support group consisted of the cruiser Portland and the DD's Bullard and Kidd. Two light carriers (CVE's) Nassau and Natoma Bay were to provide air support under command of Captain S. J. Michael.

On 23 January 1944 the APD Kane departed Pearl Harbor carrying the Reconnaissance Company under the command of Captain James Logan Jones (USMC). Kane remained in convoy until 29 January when she left to proceed alone toward Majuro. Kane arrived off the northern passage on 30 January and disembarked the detachments which were to reconnoitre the islands adjoining the channel. Landing was made not without difficulties because of high seas, on the eastern tip of Calalin where shortly after (about 2330) a single native was discovered. From questioning it was gathered that there were 3/400 Japanese laborers on Darrit Island. The detachment then proceeded across Calalin and reached the main native settlement at 0100 on 31 January. Questioning of the natives here disclosed that previous information was inaccurate and that no Japanese force was present as it had been withdrawn some months before. Apparently the misunderstanding arose from the difficulty in communication with the earlier informant rather than to an attempt on his part to mislead. It came to light, however, that one Japanese officer and a handful of civilians were on Majuro Island. Meanwhile, a detail had proceeded to Eroj Island on the west of the channel and found it unoccupied.

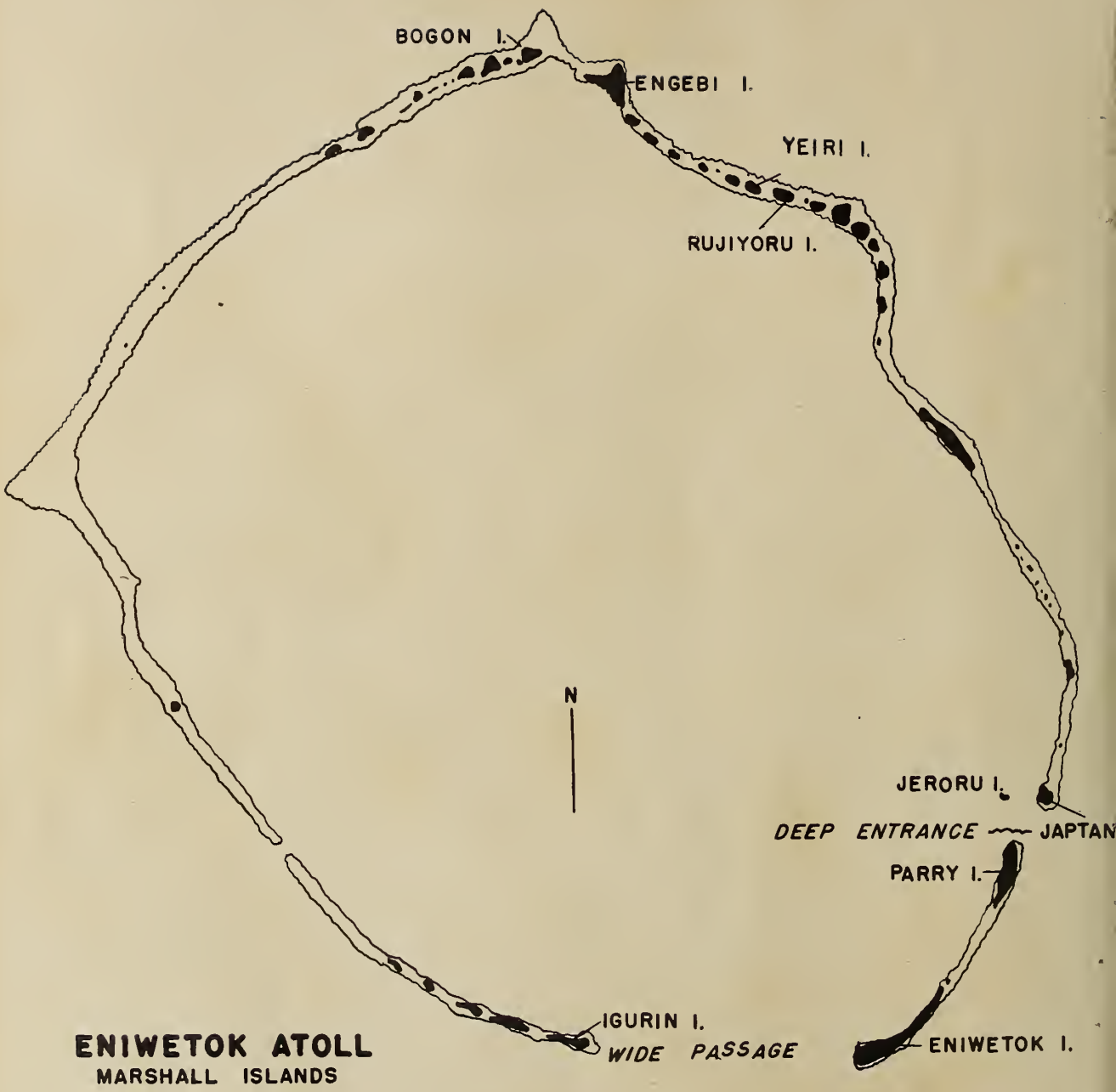
The main body of the Reconnaissance Company meanwhile proceeded in Kane to Dalap Island where an initial landing was made on the southwest tip at 0330, 31 January. The surf was very high and at various times several of the rubber boats capsized but fortunately no one was lost. Patrols pushed rapidly northeastward without flushing any hostile game and subsequently worked across the reefs to Uliga where they remained prepared to land on Darrit when the word was given.

Communications had been far from satisfactory and as a consequence the fire support ships had not been made aware that the earlier report of the presence of a Japanese force was without foundation.

At 0637 naval bombardment of Darrit began, but at 0655 contact was made with the ships who desisted from firing at the non-existent enemy. The proposed air strike was cancelled, but much to their annoyance the Reconnaissance platoon while crossing the reef to Darrit was strafed by an observation plane from Portland which luckily caused no casualties. Darrit was then thoroughly scouted. No Japanese nor natives were unearthed but several frame buildings in good condition and a considerable amount of building materials of various character were found. Fortunately the short bombardment had done them no damage. The island was covered with coconut palms and thick undergrowth.

There still remained the tasks of capturing the Japanese on Majuro Island and the reconnaissance and seizure of Arno Atoll lying to the east some ten miles. Landings were made on Majuro Island from the sea at the western part of the neck just where the island begins to bulge. Natives led the troops to the houses occupied by the Japanese. The unusual excitment alarmed the inhabitants who rushed out and managed to conceal themselves in the bush. A search of the house produced two machine guns with ammunition which it was learned had been taken from the wreck of a B-24, which had crashed at Arno some time before. The natives, still helpful, assisted a detail to dispose itself so that within an hour the Japanese officer (who turned out to be of Warrant rank) was seized without resistance.

Meanwhile, another detachment had proceeded in Kane to Arno where a landing was made at 0030, 1 February. After a march of 8 miles, which yielded no result, a stray native was picked up near the landing place and vouchsafed the information that the village was some ten miles away. The detail, in ships boats, reached the village at 0830 and found that the few Japanese families who lived there had taken refuge in the bush. There was no evidence of military installations. At 1150 the patrol returned aboard Kane and returned to Majuro.



ENIWETOK ATOLL
MARSHALL ISLANDS

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In three days the Reconnaissance Company had covered a lot of territory and secured great benefit to the United States. Its Commanding Officer (Captain James Logan Jones) has twice been awarded the Legion of Merit.

While the Reconnaissance Company was so busily engaged, the main task force was approaching the Atoll. On D-day (31 January) the channel was swept and permanent buoys planted at the lagoon entrance for the benefit of such units of the fleet as might at some time desire its shelter. (It so happened that the lagoon proved invaluable only a few days later).

After bombardment had ceased on Darrit, as mentioned above, the 2/106 Infantry embarked in Cambria, anchored off the island at 0933. Higher echelons were immediately advised that no enemy was present and that debarkation of troops would be deferred pending word that they might not be needed at Kwajalein. The troops were finally landed on D-day plus 1 (1 February). The same day the first LST's arrived and began to unload troops and equipment on Uliga and Dalap Islands.

On D-day plus 2 units of the Fleet began to arrive including Casco and patrol planes. On D-day plus 3 there were about thirty ships in the anchorage with others due to arrive in considerable numbers. Work had been begun on the airfield on Dalap.

On 4 February 1944 the Commander, Central Pacific Force announced that the capture and occupation phases had been completed. The Island Commander, Captain E. A. Cruise, USN, took over at 0600.

SECTION IX

ENIWETOK

The success of the attack on Kwajalein immediately prompted the High Command to prepare for the seizure of Eniwetok, even before the earlier operation had been concluded. On 4 February at a conference aboard USS Rocky Mount, attended by Rear Admiral R. K. Turner, Major General H. M. Smith, USMC, Rear Admiral H. W. Hill and Brigadier General T. E. Watson, USMC, preliminary plans were drawn up.

The atoll had been under continuous bombing attacks during the period of the Kwajalein assault and many aerial photographs had been taken. These apparently showed that the installations above ground had been pretty much destroyed. However, on Engebi Island the foxhole and trench systems tended to show increased development. There was no indication

of troops on Parry Island.

The plan of attack was similar to that of Kwajalein where it was believed, with justice, that the best methods for the subjugation of an atoll had been applied. Kwajalein had shown that the job could be done effectively; the only question was how long would it take for Eniwetok. Preliminary planning assumed that the forces on Eniwetok and on Parry were small and that the principal enemy concentrations would be found on Engebi.

Unlike the Kwajalein Atoll, the only passages into the lagoon are toward the south and as it was determined to assault the northern objective (Engebi Island) from the lagoon rather than the sea, the approach to it was made through entrances which were some miles distant. These were Deep Entrance just to the north of Parry Island and Wide Passage to the west of Eniwetok Island which was to be attacked only after the northern islands had been secured. (See map, page 33).

On D-day, Rujiyoru Island and Yeiri, an adjacent island to the northwest, were to be secured and artillery landed for firing upon Engebi during the assault fixed for D-day plus 1. This assault would be made by two battalions of the 22d Marines abreast with one BLT of the same regiment in reserve.

On the day succeeding the capture of Engebi (presumably D-day plus 2) it was planned to assault Eniwetok Island with one BLT of 106th Infantry, U. S. Army, with the remaining BLT in reserve. (It will be recalled that BLT 2/106 had been engaged in the seizure of Majuro Atoll and was still employed as garrison for it). Subsequent to the assault on Eniwetok, but on the same day if the situation permitted, Parry Island was to be taken by one BLT of the 106th Infantry supported by one BLT of the 22d Marines. In support of the attack artillery was to be emplaced on Eniwetok.

D-day was set originally for 12 February, then as the Kwajalein operation dragged unexpectedly on, it was shifted to the 15th and finally fixed for the 17th. Fortunately, a Japanese map of Eniwetok Atoll had been captured during the Kwajalein operation. Based on the information it contained, it was decided to proceed with the main elements of the force directly into Deep Entrance, between Parry and Japtan Islands, and to steam to anchorage areas in the vicinity of Engebi some 20 miles to the northward.

Supporting measures were airstrikes against Ponape, Jaluit, Kusaie and Wake and almost continuous air bombardment of Eniwetok itself.

On D-day heavy strikes were made against Truk, Tinian and Saipan by Task Force 50. The raid on Truk was particularly

successful and effectually prevented interference with our plans by hostile submarines or planes.

There was no chance for rehearsal, but the troops were thought to be sufficiently experienced. The 22d Marines had undergone considerable training at Samoa and at Maui, T. H. At the latter place training had included field firing problems, wherein tanks, artillery and aircraft had provided actual supporting fire. The troops had been aboard ship for about five weeks before the landing, as in the Kwajalein assault their support ashore had not been required. During the long period on ship board the time had been well spent in planning, in preparation of orders and intelligence data and in disseminating them to lower units. After the fall of Kwajalein Island a good many officers were permitted ashore to inspect the defenses and the methods by which they had been reduced. Another favorable factor was the assignment to the expedition of the LCI group and the DUKW outfit which had done such a fine piece of work at Kwajalein.

The Eniwetok Expeditionary Group as it was called (likewise designated as Task Force 51.11) was under the command of Rear Admiral H. W. Hill who had under him Brigadier General T. E. Watson, USMC, as commander of the ground forces. The Landing Forces contained as chief components:

22d Marines (reinforced) - Colonel J. T. Walker, USMC
106th Infantry (reinforced)(less 2d BLT) - Colonel R. G. Ayers, USA.
5th Amph. Corps Reconnaissance Company
Co. "D", 4th Marine Tank Battalion (Scout)
Provisional Amph. Tractor (less 1 LVT group) of the 7th Infantry Division
Company "A", 708 Amp. Tank Battalion, 7th Infantry Division
Provisional DUKW Battery, 7th Infantry Division

In support were:

Fire Support Group, Section 1, Rear Admiral J. B. Oldendorf

Colorado Louisville	3 DD's	
Section 2		
Tennessee Pennsylvania	2 DD's	Rear Admiral H. F. Kingman
Section 3		
Portland Indianapolis	2 DD's	Captain A. D. Burhans

Escort Carrier Group		Rear Admiral Van H. Ragsdale
Sangamon Suwannee Chenango	4 DD's	
Carrier Task Group		Rear Admiral S. P. Ginder
Saratoga Princeton Langley		
Cruiser Division 10		Rear Admiral L. H. Thebaud
Canberra Boston San Juan		
Destroyer Squadron 6 with eight destroyers		Captain J. M. Higgins

to which were added two minesweeping units and a service group.

All units sortied Kwajalein 15 February, the Southern Group in the morning, the Northern Group in the afternoon. The passage to Eniwetok was without incident except for some doubtful submarine contacts made by the Southern Group Screen which necessitated emergency turn maneuvers and slightly delayed the arrival of the ships off Wide Passage Eniwetok on D-day.

Bombardment of Engebi by Colorado and Louisville, of Japtan and Parry (the islands flanking Deep Entrance) by Portland and Trathen, and of the southwest tip of Eniwetok by Indianapolis and Hoel, began promptly at 0700 on D-day (17 February). There was no return fire. At the same time minesweepers of the Southern Group entered Wide Passage ahead of the LCI-LST column. At 0822 at a point some 1000 yards up the lagoon a mine was swept and movement of the group was delayed while further sweeping operations were conducted.

At 0915, Tennessee, leading the Transport Column and preceded by minesweepers, entered Deep Entrance. Flanking fire was placed on Parry and Japtan by 40mm batteries of the battleships and destroyers but, again, there was no return fire. It subsequently came to light that the Japanese had received orders to hold their fire and indeed to take every precaution against revealing their presence to the entering ships. One is tempted here for a moment to consider the state of mind of the Japanese who lay concealed in the dense growth of the islands and watched our ships slip by a scant

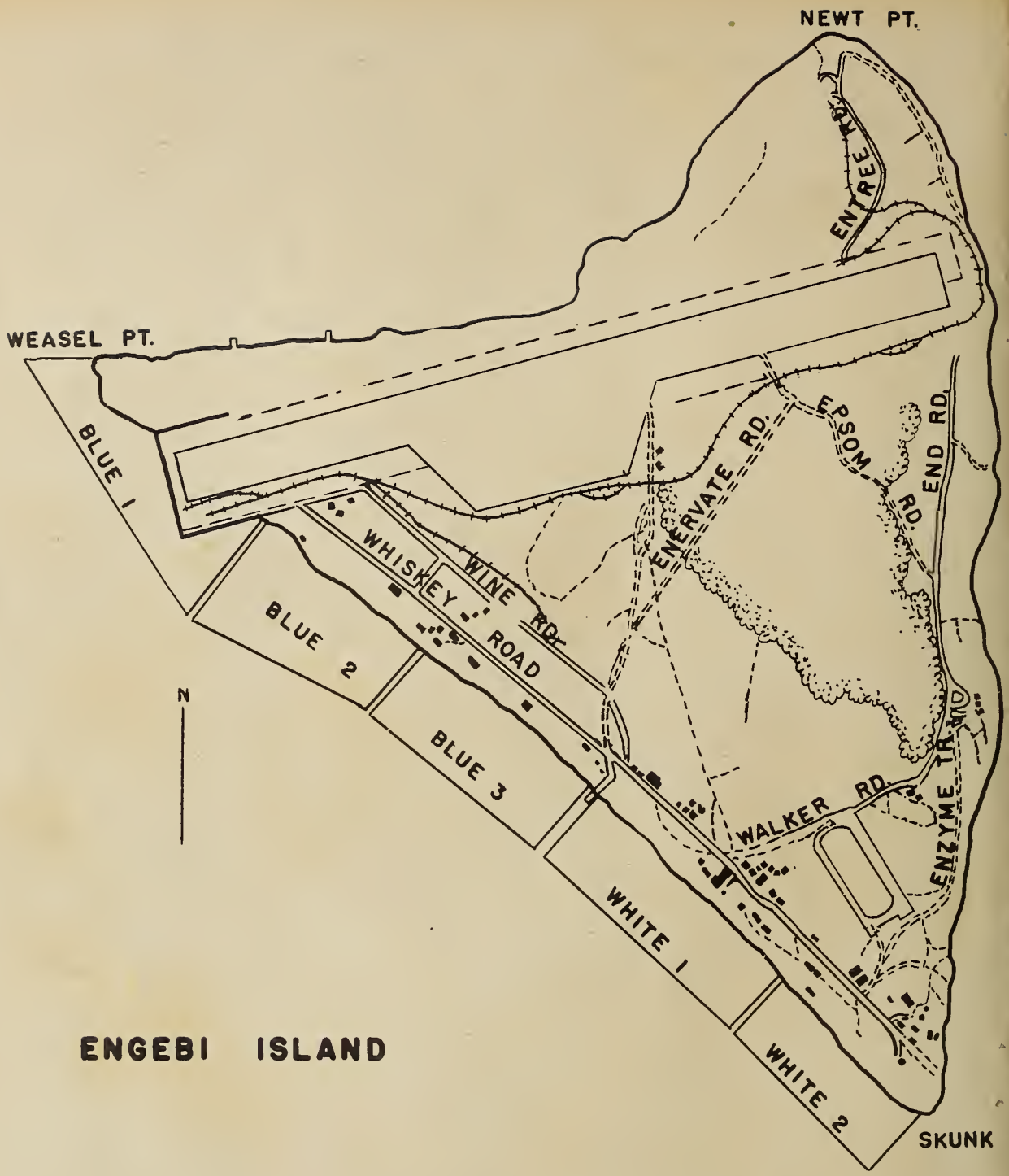
halfmile away. They must have watched with unwilling admiration the great battleships--which their treachery had shattered on that terrible Sunday in December 1941--returning for the kill. Perhaps they were doubly haunted by the thought that these formidable instruments of destruction, these inhuman masses of steel, could harbor the human instinct of revenge which at long last they had come to seek. Every man who watched those ships knew that his hours were numbered. The end had come, not quickly from a bullet in the heat and delirium of battle, but from an angel of doom, potent, inflexible, devastating, ready to strike at his pleasure. In every heart there must have burned a fiery nostalgia which defied every effort to extinguish it and with each passing hour of life scorched the very vitals of the mind and soul. It's sweet to die for the Emperor, perhaps they thought, but how much sweeter if death were softened by one--only one--more look at the homeland, at the small places and the small people who were so dear.

By 1034 all vessels had entered the lagoon safely and were proceeding to their initial anchorages.

By afternoon a sea plane base had been established to the west of Piirai Island.

There was still considerable to be done before the operations of D-day could be considered as successfully concluded. Chief in importance was the job of securing Rujiyuro and Yeiri Islands so that the artillery could be landed at the earliest possible moment for registration on Engebi. Fortunately there was no opposition. The VAC Reconnaissance Company landed from LVT's and reported the islands secured at 1354. Artillery began at once to be put ashore. The 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion landed on Yeiri Island while the 104th F. A. Battalion (105mm) occupied Rujiyoru, travelling in faithful DUKW's. At 1602 all artillery had landed and had completed registration three hours later. While this task was proceeding the VAC Reconnaissance Company secured the small islands to the northwest and southeast of the artillery positions.

Meanwhile, Company "D" (Scout) 4th Tank Battalion of the 4th Marine Division was ordered to land on Bogon, the island immediately to the west of Engebi in order to secure it and to prevent the possible escape of the enemy from Engebi. In the darkness and due to the heavy sea the Company was unable to land on Bogon from rubber boats and became separated, part of them returning to the APD Schley on which they had been embarked. The other half managed to land on Teileiripucchi two islands below Bogon and worked its way in rubber boats up the reefs to its original objective which



ENGEBI ISLAND

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100 0 100 200 300 YDS.

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was reached at 0327, 18 February and found to be deserted.

While these interesting events were occurring the Beach Reconnaissance party closed Engebi supported by fires from Colorado, Tennessee and supporting destroyers. The mission was accomplished smartly and without casualties in spite of sporadic machine gun fire from the beaches. Boat lanes and shoal spots were buoyed and all possible preparations completed to assist the assault of the morrow.

The Japs must have realized we meant business. Destroyers had fired on the islands flanking Engebi during the afternoon of D-day and at dawn (0620) of D-day plus 1 (18 February) Tennessee and Pennsylvania moved into their selected areas and delivered most effective flanking fire against the lagoon beach defenses of the objective.

Engebi Island is roughly triangular, the southern base fronting the lagoon for something over a mile of which the landing beaches occupied about 750 yards to the right center. A single runway airstrip extended across the northwest side and the northern tip of the island was almost entirely cleared. Otherwise it was covered with evenly spaced coconut palms or low brush.

The Line of Departure was about 4000 yards from the beaches and the assault waves had been launched in LVT's from their LST's (to which they had been transferred the previous afternoon) another 1000 yards to the south. LVT(A1's) equipped with 37mm cannon protected the flanks and center of the first wave. All possible insurance against loss of landing craft and personnel was further provided by fires from the LCI's, the Destroyers and Battleships and from the artillery on Yeiri and Rujiyoru Islands.

At 0842, a touch ahead of schedule, BLT 1/22 and BLT 2/22 landed abreast on Beaches Blue 3 and White 1 on the lagoon side of Engebi. The dividing line between the battalions was a pier about half way between "Skunk" Point on the southeast end and the extension of the airstrip which protruded into the lagoon. The waves of the second battalion landed pretty much as expected but because of the smoke which largely obscured the beaches, the first battalion landed further to the west than planned and caused temporarily a gap between the landing teams. However, this severance of the line was soon cared for.

There must be mentioned here one of those pathetic episodes incident to the horrible waste of war. One tank was lost in the landings. It was boated in an LCM on which, unfortunately, only one engine was functioning. By some mischance the lever depressing the ramp was operated with the result that the craft began to flood rapidly while still

500 yards off shore. The tank crew had "buttoned up" and could gain but small idea of the accident. Despite the frantic efforts of the LCM's crew to warn the occupants, the desperate urgency of the situation was not appreciated. The LCM gradually filled, listed and finally spilled her load into the lagoon, turning completely over. At the last possible moment one of the crew of the tank managed to escape as the tank actually hit bottom forty feet down.

The scheme of maneuver called for the 2d Battalion, which had landed on Beach Blue to bear to the left and clean up the strong points on either side of the airstrip. Tanks were landed early to knock out the stronger of the emplacements and the pillboxes. BLT 1/22, on the right, had planned to land two companies abreast and to push inland to the right in zones generally parallel to the airstrip. The first two waves met only sniper fire but the third encountered automatic and rifle fire. Some of the LVT's, which had been constantly employed without opportunity for overhaul, began to show the results of wear and tear and in some instances to lose their ability to steer accurately. In consequence, some of the units were delayed in landing and did not land on the points on the beach to which they had originally been directed. The consequence was that "A" Company on the right of the 1st Battalion found its right flank exposed due to the nonarrival of an expected platoon, and the attack was held up while assistance of a tank platoon was called for.

About this time BLT 3/22 was landed and one of its companies was employed to follow Company "A" in the attack with tanks and later to pass through it.

There was heavy fighting from strong and well concealed emplacements but the result was never in doubt. Considerable number of Japanese troops who had held out for a time at "Skunk" Point and from which they could enfilade Beach White 1 were eventually forced northward along the eastern shore of the island, gradually isolated and cut down.

It was by no means easy going, however, because of the nature of the terrain which at that point was covered with heavy brush and the extensive Japanese defenses which abounded in the area.

Not a few of these defenses were of the "spider web" type to which there were many entrances. They were constructed by knocking out the heads of empty gasoline drums and making an impromptu pipe line of them, sunk into the ground and covered with earth and palm fronds. The tunnels thus constructed branched off in several directions from a central pit and the whole emplacement was usually concealed

with great skill and ingenuity. If the main position was apotted and attacked the riflemen within could crawl off fifty feet or so down one of the corridors and emerge at an entirely different and unexpected spot from which they could get off a shot and drive down to concealment before it was possible to determine whence the fire proceeded. Every foot of ground had to be gone over with the greatest precaution and alertness before these honeycombs of death could be silenced by the literal process of elimination.

At 1450 the island had been secured except for certain isolated snipers, pillboxes, and underground shelters. Nevertheless, the fighting continued after darkness fell against small groups of the enemy who struck back all night long with fire from tree tops and from knee mortars. Some of our own weapons were directed against ourselves by Japs who had infiltrated and helped themselves to rifles and ammunition which in the heat of the combat had been laid down as the troops were occupied with torpedoes and demolition charges.

At 0800 19 February, to the accompaniment of a captured Japanese bugle, colors were sounded and BLT 1/22 with the permission of the Regimental Commander raised the first American Flag on Eniwetok Atoll at that moment nearer than any other captured territory to Japan. Meanwhile, on the previous day BLT 3/22, which, as has been noted, had landed as reserve at 0955, had been ordered to reembark about 1700 for the purpose of assisting in the third phase of the operations: the reduction of Eniwetok Island.

As previously mentioned there is, unfortunately, but little information at present available regarding details of the fighting on Engebi and Parry and it seems proper to insert here (with the permission of the Editors) excerpts from letters of Lieutenant Cord Meyer, Jr., USMCR, to his parents which appeared in the October 1944 issue of the ATLANTIC, and had previously been published in the HORAE SCHOLASTICAE of St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, of which Lieutenant Meyer is a graduate.

"We arrived here (Eniwetok Atoll) and assaulted the main island of the group. I, with my MG platoon, was in the second wave of assault troops, landing three minutes after the first wave. There was some fire on the beach but we moved inland quickly until we came to an edge of blasted coconut grove. I was in front line with my runner, looking for possible machine-gun positions, and had the guns some fifty yards back.

"We were hard hit there, and with terrible clarity the reality of the event came home to me. I had crawled forward to ask a Marine where the Japs were--pretty excited really and enjoying it almost like a game. I crawled up

beside him but he wouldn't answer. Then I saw the ever widening pool of dark blood by his head and knew that he was dying or dead. So it came over me what this war was, and after that it wasn't fun or exciting, but something that had to be done.

"Fortune smiled on me that day, or the hand of a divine Providence was over me, or I was just plain lucky. We killed many of them in fighting that lasted to nightfall. We cornered fifty or so Imperial Marines on the end of the island, where they attempted a banzai charge, but we cut them down like overripe wheat, and they lay like tired children with their faces in the sand.

"That night was unbelieveably terrible. There were many of them left and they all had one fanatical notion, and that was to take one of us with them. We dug in with orders to kill anything that moved. I kept watch in a foxhole with my sergeant and we both stayed awake all night with a knife in one hand and a grenade in the other. They crept in among us, and every bush or rock took on sinister proportions. They got some of us, but in the morning they all lay about, some with their riddled bodies actually inside our foxholes. With daylight, it was easy for us and we finished them off. Never have I been so glad to see the blessed sun.

"So we left that place and went back aboard ship, where we stayed a day and a night desperately trying to get our gear into shape. Then the following morning we attacked another island, which was much more heavily defended. The beach was swept with machine-gun fire and they had heavy mortars ranged in on us. I was again very lucky to get through there and proceeded across the ruined, shell-blasted soil rocked by the continual mortar bursts. The captain to whose company we were attached suddenly pointed, and above the brush line I saw 150 or so men bending forward, moving steadily parallel to us. We were fifty yards from them and waved at them, thinking they must be Marines. They paid little attention to us and seemed to be setting up machine guns, and we suddenly realized they were Japs.

"We had just half a platoon of men and two MG's. We set the guns up and started firing at them. One gun wouldn't work, so we buried the parts in the sand, because we thought they would charge us and we knew we couldn't stop them. We didn't want them to get the gun. For some reason, they didn't attack, so we moved in against them. We threw grenades back and forth for a couple of hours and many were killed on both sides. Finally we threw a whole volley of grenades and charged in and got to the

beach. Down it we could see a whole group of them. So the twelve of us, standing, kneeling, or lying prone, fired our rifles and carbines. They fell like ducks in a shooting gallery and the exhilaration of battle rose in us. They closed in on us and we had to back out.

"But we got some tanks and reinforcements some half hour later and moved through them in skirmish line, which brings this tale to the most extraordinary incident of all. I was following some ten yards behind the tanks, when a Jap officer came out of a hole pointing his pistol at me; so instinctively I shot my carbine from the hip and hit him full in the face. I walked forward and looked into the trench and saw another with his arm cocked to throw a grenade. He didn't see me. I was only six feet away. I pulled the trigger but the weapon was jammed with sand. I had to do something, so I took my carbine by the barrel and hit him with all my might at the base of the neck. It broke his neck and my carbine.

"Finally we killed them all. They never surrender. Again the night was a bad one, but with the dawn came complete victory, and those of us who still walked without a wound looked in amazement at our whole bodies. There was not much jubilation. We just sat and stared at the sand, and most of us thought of those who were gone--those whom I shall remember as always young, smiling, and graceful, and I shall try to forget how they looked at the end, beyond all recognition. . . .

"I don't think I praised my men properly in the last letter. They obeyed with an unquestioning courage. One of my section leaders was hit by a bullet in his arm. It spun him clear around and set him down on his behind. A little dazed, he sat there for a second and then jumped up with the remark, 'The little bastards will have to hit me with more than that.' I had to order him back to the dressing station an hour later. He was weak with loss of blood but actually pleaded to stay.

"My runner was knocked down right beside me with three bullet holes in him and blood all over his face. Stupidly I said, 'Are you hit, boy?' He was crying a little, being just a kid of eighteen, and said, 'I'm sorry, sir. I guess I'm just a sissy.' I damn near cried myself at that. I'm trying to get him a citation because he was a very brave boy and never delivered a false message or failed to do what I told him. He will live, thanks to our good doctors. . . .

"As to the real significance of the events, it will only come home to me with time, but this much I do know.

As we buried our dead, I swore to myself that if it was within my power I should see to it that these deaths would not be forgotten or valued lightly. I felt more strongly than ever the wrongness of so many things. Their motionless young bodies, their inarticulate lips, seemed a monumental reproach to us the living, seeming to say, 'Well, we did all you asked. We gave up everything, all we might have been and done, all love, all hope, all laughter, all tomorrows. What are you going to do now? Is it going to be any different, any better now? If you don't do what you can, at least you will never forget us. We will touble your midnight and your noon's repose with the specter of our speechless gaze. Certainly we can do no more. The rest lies all with you.' So, remembering them, I find heart for the long road and the many battles and determination for the peaceful time. . . .

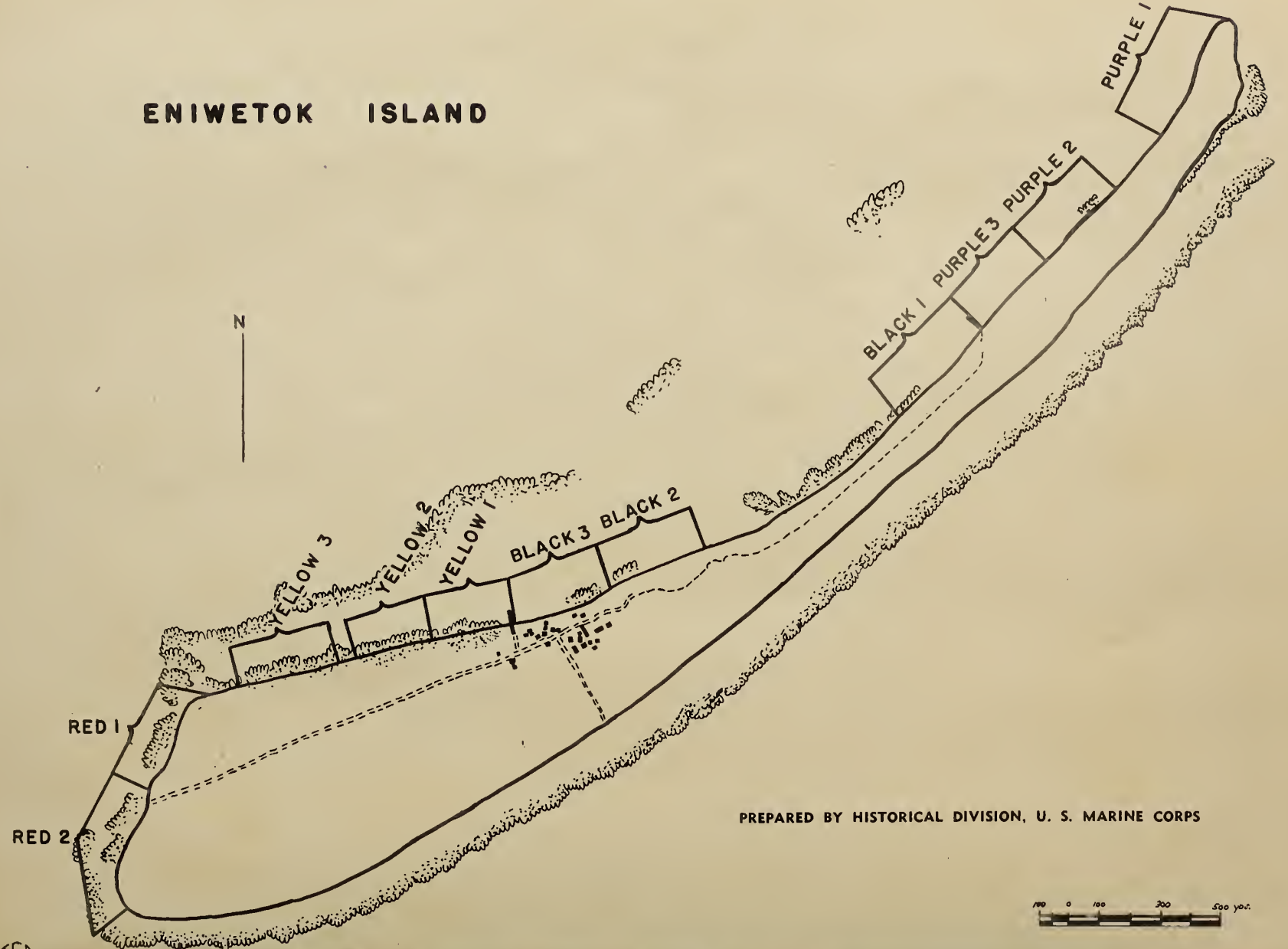
"The newspapers which at one and the same time preach against optimism and then paint the news in the rosiest hues do nothing to help. From my own experience, I can assure you that though the papers do not actually falsify, they do underplay the difficulties of operations and play to the limit the final success. Actually, we have only begun out here, as no one can see more clearly than we ourselves. Ahead of us lie the limitless distances of this colossal ocean, the bitterly defended fortress that the Japs have made of their islands, the almost impenetrable jungles where operations must necessarily move at a snail's pace; and finally, when we have won through to the China coast, the problem of conquering 200 well-trained Jap divisions operating on interior lines of supply."

Prior to the assault on Eniwetok Island, the VAC Reconnaissance Company proceeded to secure the islands on the eastern edge of the lagoon down to Ruunitto Island and in due course on 19 February secured Japtan Island immediately flanking Deep Entrance.

On 18 February the Scout Company was similarly employed in securing the islands to the southwest of Engebi taking all of them down to and including Bogallua Island. This completed the clean up of the smaller islands in the northern sector of the atoll. On 19 February taking the Schley to the southward they landed on Rigili Island where about a dozen Japanese put up a short and fruitless resistance. Then working their way in a southeasterly direction they secured all islands down to Igurin across Wide Passage from Eniwetok some 10,000 yards east.

All islands of the atoll with the exception of Eniwetok and Parry and tiny Jeroru in the center of Deep Entrance were now under control of the attacking forces.

ENIWETOK ISLAND



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Intelligence had reported that there were more Japanese troops on Eniwetok and Parry Islands than originally had been supposed, about 600 on the former and 800 on the latter. The Headquarters of Major General Nishida Commanding the First Mobile Seaborne Brigade was also supposedly on Parry. It was therefore determined to reduce Eniwetok first rather than to attempt a double operation and to employ 2 BLT's of the 106th Infantry with 1 BLT of the 22d Marines in reserve.

Landings were to be made in column of battalions on Beaches Yellow 1 and 2 on the lagoon side of the southwest portion of Eniwetok close to where it widens out to a width of some 600 yards. During the night of 18-19 February the assault units moved to anchorages off Eniwetok, and the 104 F.A. Battalion was reembarked from Rujiyoru. During the operation one gun and one DUKW were lost when the vehicle capsized.

At 0800 19 February the situation was as follows:

a) The 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion was on Yeiri Island under control of RCT 22.

b) The Reconnaissance Company and the Scout Company of the 4th Tank Battalion were engaged in reducing the islands on the eastern and western sides of the lagoon.

c) RCT 106 and attached units were forming for the landing on Eniwetok.

d) The 104 F.A. Battalion was afloat off Eniwetok.

e) BLT 1/22 was preparing to reembark from Engebi.

Landings were made on Beaches Yellow 1 and 2 at 0915 (19 February) by the two battalions of 106th Infantry. Enemy opposition at the beach was light. Some machine gun fire was received from a position on the right flank and some rifle fire was reported from positions inland. There seems, however, to have been considerable hesitancy on the part of the infantry to move away from the sand dunes fifty yards or so from the beaches which afforded excellent cover.

BLT 1/106 was to move to the right to seize the south end of the island while BLT 3/106 was to move northeast leaving Beach Yellow 1 on its left. The attack advanced slowly and succeeding waves congested the beach until they had to be held off shore to come in on order. Tanks were landed promptly but the field artillery had to be held off. Enemy resistance was stubborn and consisted of rifle and mortar fire from trenches, undergrowth, shelters and from dense jungle areas which held up the advance.

At 1330 BLT 3/22 was landed and shortly afterward was committed, taking over the eastern half of the southern attack with BLT 1/106 on its right. By 2100 (19 February) it was evident that the capture of Eniwetok could not be completed before the evening of 20 February at the earliest. BLT 3/22 and 1/106 therefore dug in for the night. Due to the nature of the ground the lines were indeterminate at the boundary and neither battalion was in position where the other precisely expected it. In consequence, there was some infiltration in the lines of BLT 3/22 which resulted in an attack on its Command Post and the death of two officers.

In order to make the attack on Parry on 21 February it was determined that the remainder of RCT 22 should be withdrawn from Engebi. Accordingly orders were issued for the Howitzer Battalion on Yeiri Island to embark and land on Japtan by 1200, 20 February and to register on Parry. At 2230 RCT 22 was ordered to embark the remaining troops and to proceed to the transport area off Eniwetok.

That this move was possible was due to the fact that troops and equipment of the Garrison Forces had begun to arrive at Engebi on 19 February. At 1200 on 20 February responsibility for the defense of the island was placed on the Commanding Officer (Colonel C. R. Jones) of the 3d Army Defense Battalion. Companies "A" and "D" of the 111th Infantry, U. S. Army, were sent northward and debarked so that by nightfall some 900 troops were available.

The situation at about 0800 on 20 February was as follows:

a) BLT 3/22 and BLT 1/106 and the 2d Separate Tank Company were engaged with the enemy on the Southern end of Eniwetok.

b) BLT 3/106 with the Light Tank Company (Company "C", 706th Tank Battalion) was proceeding slowly northeast where the island begins to narrow down.

c) BLT 1/22 was in the Transport Area off Eniwetok.

d) The Reconnaissance Company was on Japtan awaiting the arrival of the Howitzer Battalion which was en route from Yeiri Island. The Scout Company of the 4th Tank Battalion was embarked and ready to proceed to the Transport Area off Eniwetok.

e) The remainder of the 104th F.A. Battalion was preparing to land on Eniwetok.

f) The remainder of RCT 22 was reembarking at Engebi.

g) The LVT's had been reloaded on the LST's. By 1200 the Pack Howitzer Battalion was on Japtan and preparing to register on Parry.

After a conference about 1400 with the Commanding Officers of RCT's 22 and 106 it was decided among other matters to:

a) Postpone the attack on Parry until 0845, 22 February.

b) Have BLT 1/106 take over the area of BLT 3/106 so that the latter could reembark if necessary on the morning of 22 February if required as group reserve.

c) Attach the Reconnaissance Company and the Scout Company to RCT 22.

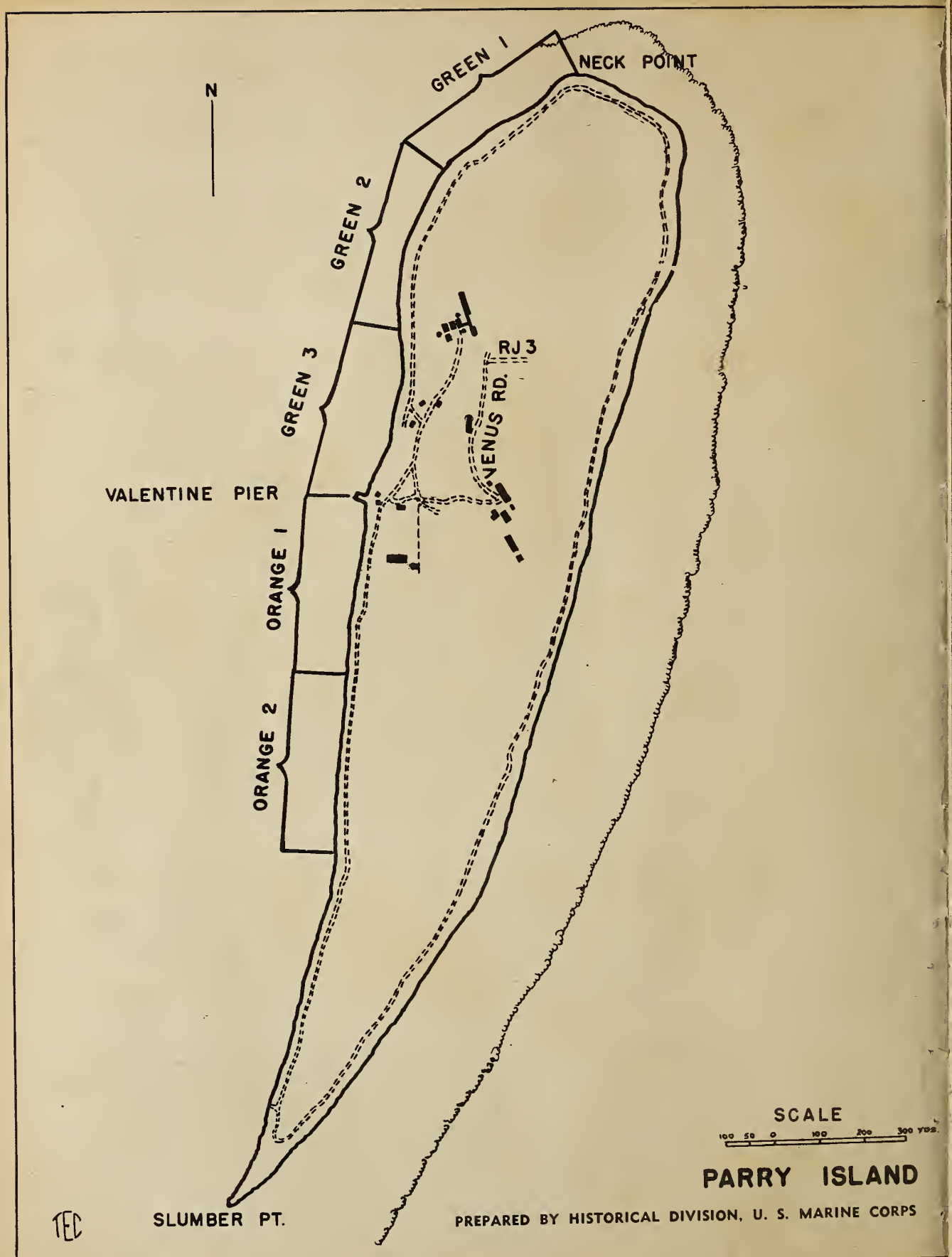
By 1200, 21 February, the 10th Defense Battalion had arrived in the Transport Area and the Commanding Officer (Colonel W. O. Thompson, USMC) was ordered to organize five companies of one hundred men each to be prepared to land on Parry on 22 February upon Group Order. Lieutenant Colonel R. E. Hommel, USMC, was placed in command of this special force, whose services as it turned out were not required: three hundred were armed with rifles and the remainder with carbines. It was known that they had had but little training as infantry. Ammunition threatened to run low and definite limits were fixed for its expenditure for daylight on 21 February and harassing and star shell fires of the ensuing night. Demolitions and hand grenades also grew scarce but a supply was flown in from Kwajalein which arrived on 22 February about 1130.

On the afternoon of the 21st a detachment of the Reconnaissance Company occupied tiny Jeroru Island and later withdrew.

Eniwetok Island was overrun by evening of 21 February and only mopping up remained to be done. At Engebi all was quiet.

By 2100 all RCT 22 assault battalions had been put aboard LST's in preparation for the attack on Parry.

Parry -- Perhaps tactics or strategy never work out precisely as intended, but it would seem that the attacking forces had not been able to guage with exactitude the weight of opposition to be met in the three principal objectives. Engebi had been thought to be the toughest, yet it had been overrun in the comparatively short time of six hours. Eniwetok



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originally considered as the second most difficult objective proved much more stubborn than anticipated. And Parry, which had first been thought of as secondary, in the light of later intelligence reports, had suddenly become the toughest nut of all to crack.

Preceded by intense gunfire from Tennessee and Pennsylvania who were firing at a range of 1500 yards, by bombing attacks, and artillery fire from both Eniwetok and Japtan, landings were made on Beaches Green 2 and 3 (from the lagoon on the northwest part of the island) by BLT 1/22 and BLT 2/22 abreast.

The scheme of maneuver was to land BLT 1/22 on the right with BLT 2/22 on its left and BLT 3/22 in reserve. The 2d Battalion was to seize and mop up the north end of the island and then prepare to act as reserve for an attack by the 1st and 3d Battalions in the south. The 1st Battalion was to cross the island in its zone of action building up and holding a front to its right flank until the 3d Battalion could be landed and take over the western half (lagoon) of the attack to the south. This attack was to be made by the battalions in column of companies.

The 1st Battalion, on the right, was landed, without at first realizing its position, at a point some 400 yards south of where it expected to be, or in most part on Beach Orange 1. The first wave was landed to the south of Valentine Pier, the second about 200 yards to the north of it and the third in the gap between the first and second waves. Again, and still more noticeably than at Engebi, the LVT's crisscrossed and broke down en route to the beach so that in addition to the dispersal of units in the various waves, men in a given team were separated from one another and from their leaders.

The beach and the immediate water near it were covered with intense machine gun and mortar fire. At this point there was a sand dune perhaps ten feet in height rising inland from the narrow beach. As the men lay on this slight eminence preparing to go forward they were enfiladed by machine gun fire on the right flank and from the rear by a gun hidden in the pier.

A considerable number of the enemy were in trenches and foxholes along the sand dune and many hand to hand encounters ensued on the pock-marked beach during which officers and non-commissioned officers rose magnificently to the task of reorganizing men who were confused by being separated from their units and their usual leaders.

Casualties on the beach were fairly heavy but evacuation was quickly begun in a Higgins boat which, it was found, could readily negotiate the reef.

Gradually the enfilading machine guns were located and destroyed by grenades and the fire of 37mm and 75mm guns. After hasty reorganization at the beach the attack passed over the sand dune and was instantly met by very heavy knee mortar and automatic fire. It then appeared that a large number of the enemy had survived the intense Naval bombardment by seeking shelter on the ocean (eastern) side of the Island in natural and man made caves and tunnels.

The attack of BLT 1/22 had progressed about half way across the island, a distance of about 250 yards, when the troops began to receive heavy enfilading fire from Japanese 77mm guns on the right flank and not over 300 yards distant. Naval gunfire was requested on these guns under the apprehension that the troops had landed at the point originally planned. This request was denied by higher echelons who, through the air observer, realized that the troops had been landed outside the designated area and would be endangered by this fire. However, a direct request did get through and five salvos from 5 inch guns were furnished. Ordinarily a single salvo would have been called for and subsequently adjusted, but due to the urgency of the request support of 5 salvos was called for initially. Just prior to the delivery of this fire the fifth wave had been landed at a point still further to the south and in front of a Japanese strong point. Furthermore, medium tanks were moving across the front of BLT 1/22 and engaging three Japanese tanks which had been immobilized but were still able to fire. The Naval gunfire struck some of our medium tanks, one of which received two direct hits, but (by good fortune) only one of the men of the crew was killed and three wounded. The Naval gunfire fell to a certain extent among our own troops, those of the first wave and those of the fifth wave. Fortunately, however, few of our own men were badly hit, whereas the Japanese suffered heavily as the weight of the salvos landed just over our own lines and in the middle of a concentration of the enemy. Momentarily some of our troops were shell shocked and stunned but the enemy were in similar and worse position. The result of this Naval support was to knock out the Japanese field pieces and to enable our troops to push across the island and build up the new front to the right flank.

As the troops reached the ocean beach they detected a group of 150 to 200 Japanese travelling north in single file along the beach and below a sand dune which rose above it. The enemy were apparently unaware that our troops had crossed the island and were carrying machine guns, mortars and automatic weapons. Our troops quickly set up machine guns at

either end of the Japanese column while a small group engaged them on the flank across the sand dune with small arms fire and grenades. The entire enemy force was rapidly exterminated.

At 1330 a coordinated attack was launched in a southerly direction, in which Company "D" (Scout) also joined, from a point 200 yards south of Valentine Pier, the lines extending entirely across the island. Tanks preceeded the infantry by about 100 yards.

This attack was preceded by an artillery preparation lasting fifteen minutes from the artillery on Japtan and Parry which caught the enemy between two fires while at the same time Naval gunfire cut them down from the flank. By 1400 the situation began to clear up, but the fighting still continued savage in the dense jungle growth through which the advancing troops had to struggle. The enemy resisted with rifle, machine gun and mortar fire from entrenchments and underground emplacements. Nevertheless, the attack moved forward at about 250 yards an hour. By 1800 about 500 yards of the southern end of Parry remained to be secured. The tanks moved forward ahead of the troops with the same remorseless efficiency. By 1930 enemy resistance which had gradually grown less, ceased. It was determined, however, to conclude the attack on the following morning and the battalions, which, after withdrawing somewhat from the line of their farthest advance, dug in for the night in a fashion to preclude as far as possible the danger of infiltration. With the exception of mopping up operations the whole of Eniwetok Atoll had fallen to our arms.

During the night of 22-23 February, Parry was illuminated intermittently by star shells. These tactics proved useful in exposing small enemy groups who were moving aimlessly about and could be picked off easily before they could make any organized attempt to harass us. The illumination served as well to steady our troops who had been under great and continuous strain.

On the following morning (23 February) the remainder of the island was cleared of the few enemy stragglers that were still putting up hopeless resistance.

BLT 3/106, which had remained afloat during the attack, was ordered to land on Parry to relieve one BLT of RCT 22. The detachment of the 10th Defense Battalion which had been ordered to stand by was released to Garrison Commander. At 1045 23 February the American Flag was hoisted over Parry.

It is impossible to describe adequately the weight of the naval and air bombardment thrown upon the hapless defenders. No troops could have stood it for long. In consequence,

though the Japs fought to the last man their efforts of resistance lacked cohesion due to the utter disruption of communications and the fact that they had never been prepared to withstand anything like the force which was thrown against them.

A total of 2345 tons of ammunition was hurled against the strongholds of the atoll divided into:

650	rounds of	16" projectiles
1714	rounds of	14" projectiles
2553	rounds of	8" projectiles
20016	rounds of	5" projectiles

This does not take into account the land artillery and the air bombardment.

This distribution of fire was divided as follows:

Engebi	1179.7 tons
Parry	944.4 tons
Eniwetok.	204.6 tons

with a balance of 16.2 tons scattered among the smaller islands which had been under attack.

It is extraordinary that more damage was not caused to our own ships which conditions of visibility often obscured. The only grave accident of this character occurred during the landings on Parry when 3 LCI's which were supporting the right flank of the wave were struck by 5 inch fire from the destroyer Hailey, with a loss of 13 killed and 47 wounded. The light craft were able, however, to discharge their rockets before giving attention to their immediate plight and displayed great gallantry under disheartening conditions. These ships were subsequently able to return to duty.

In his report of the operation Rear Admiral H. W. Hill said:

> "I cannot praise too highly the performance of all hands. Men, equipment and ammunition had been used to the limit. Casualties, although not excessive, had been considerable. Some of the troops had been employed in two major assaults and some in three with only a day of rest between. In spite of this the fighting spirit, determination and combat efficiency was of the highest order and I feel that no words of praise on my part can do them complete justice."

SECTION X

THE FOURTH PHASE

SEIZURE OF THE LESSER MARSHALLS

With the exception of the important atolls of Wotje, Maloelap, Mille and Jaluit on the eastern flank of the Marshalls, which are still in Japanese hands, all the remainder are under American control.

It will be recalled that Majuro had been declared captured without losses on 31 January, Kwajalein on 8 February and Eniwetok on 23 February. The casualties in the latter operation are as follows:

Kwajalein:	American	Japanese	Eniwetok:	American	Japanese
KIA	367	8122[1]		299	3400[1]
WIA	1584			786	
POW		99			53
		165(Korean)			13(Korean)
	1951	8386		1085	3466

On 12 February Arno Atoll adjoining Majuro was taken. There were no further moves until early in March when the lesser atolls were systematically visited and explored, and such Japanese as were found on them exterminated. This campaign continued until 23 April when it was completed for want of other atolls to conquer. To be sure the four atolls mentioned above still hold enemy forces of varying strength for whom life today must hold little delight. The food supplies have been gradually diminishing, reducing the troops to the simple fare of the natives. American planes visit the atolls almost daily and bomb the daylights out of the remaining installations. No reinforcement or withdrawal is possible. There is nothing to do but wait.

For purposes of planning their reduction, the atolls were divided into various groups as follows:

1) West Group: Wotho, Ujae, Lae and Lib (Island)
2) South Group: Namu, Ailinglapalap, Namorik, Ebon and Kili (Island)
3) North Group: Bikini, Rongelap, Ailinginae, Rongerik
4) Northwest Group: Bikar, Utirik, Taka, Ailuk, Likiep, Mejit and Jemo (Island)

All operations were based on Kwajalein which, it will be noted, is relatively in the center of the groups.

[1]Approximate number buried.

All operations were based on Kwajalein which, it will be noted, is relatively in the center of the groups.

Each atoll and island was reconnoitered by low-level PBY flights by the landing force commanders and the operations group prior to each operation. The naval force for each landing consisted usually of one LST with six to nine LVT's, two LCI's, one DD or DE and one AM to sweep channels. Air support was furnished by three SBD's on call, with anti-submarine patrols for each force.

The West Group

Wotho -- The first of the operations--to take over the West Group--was entrusted to Companies "B" and "C" and other elements of the 1st Battalion, 22d Marines under the command of Major C. B. Lawton. The Task Unit consisting of Requisite (large minesweeper), LST 23, LCI's 441 and 345, under command of Lieutenant Commander R. Eikel, Jr., USN, departed Kwajalein Atoll on 7 March and on the following day at 1330 landed about 100 men on Kabben Island, Wotho Atoll. No Japanese or natives were found. During the night two natives who were a part of the command were put aboard LCI 441 and taken close in to Wotho Island. From information received it appeared there were twelve Japanese on the island, survivors of a bomber which had crashed. On 9 March at 0800 a force of about 180 troops was landed only to discover that the Japanese had retreated to Kabben during the night. The note requesting their surrender had not been delivered due to the fear of the native messenger that he would be killed if he made any such attempt. One platoon in two LVT's then proceeded down the reef in an attempt to close with the Japs. Machine gun fire was heard and in due course the bodies of Japanese soldiers were observed on the sand. After an attempt by the interpreter to persuade any living Jap to surrender and no reply being received, machine gun fire was opened. All twelve men were dead when reached: it appeared that one man had killed the other eleven members of the crew and then turned the machine gun on himself. One Marine was killed by the accidental explosion of a hand grenade. Having learned from the natives of no further enemy activity on the atoll, the troops were reembarked.

Ujae -- At 1700 on 10 March a force of about forty troops was landed on Wotya Island, Ujae Atoll. There it was learned there were six Japanese on Ujae Island. Natives were sent ashore in the darkness to gather information and returned with the news that the Japs were prepared to resist. On 11 March at 1000 troops were landed and deployed across the island. On reaching a clearing one Jap was found seriously injured and apparently unarmed. He was taken prisoner and later admitted that after one abortive attempt, he had lost

the desire to do away with himself. The other five had committed suicide with their own hand grenades. Air support had been called on station for Ujae and was ready to support the landing. The Atoll Commander and staff observed this landing from a PBY at 300 feet.

On 12 March a landing was made on another island of Ujae Atoll for purposes of examining the natives and distributing foodstuffs. No more landings were made, in view of the information received that all enemy had been liquidated.

Lae -- The following day landings were made on two islands of Lae Atoll. There were no Japanese, and the only sign of their activity was a memorial to their dead erected on Lotj Island in 1942.

The reconnaissance force then returned to Kwajalein on 15 March and disembarked on Bigej Island.

Lib Island -- Simultaneously Lib Island, about 30 miles southwest of Kwajalein Island, was taken over. On 11 March LCI #81, with one platoon of the 1st Battalion, 22d Marines, under command of 1st Lieutenant W. F. Lloyd, left Kwajalein lagoon at 0600 and arrived off Lib some three hours later. The troops started ashore in rubber boats but were unable to cross the reef in them and therefore waded to the beach. The natives reported that no Japanese had come to the island since early November 1943. When questioned about the natives and Japanese on other atolls they reported that they had never travelled and only knew of the outside world from visits paid to them. There are moments when one might be tempted to envy them.

The South Group

The next operation which led to the south and contemplated the reconnaissance and seizure of Ailinglapalap, Namu, Ebon and Namorik Atolls and Kili Island. The troop units were divided into two forces consisting of:

No. 1. Headquarters Unit 3/22 (Major William E. Sperling, III.
2 Companies Infantry (less 1 platoon) reinforced
½ Platoon Engineers
Civil Affairs Party

No. 2. Headquarters Unit 3/22 (Major C. W. Shisler)
1 Company Infantry (plus 1 platoon) reinforced
½ Platoon Engineers
Civil Affairs Party

The Reconnaissance Forces were also divided into two units: No. 1 consisting of LST 23, LCT 933 (with tanks), and LCI 348 which carried the landing forces under command

of Lieutenant J. B. Swann, Jr., USCGR, and No. 2 made up of LST 127, LCI 346 and LCI 449 under command of Lieutenant Commander R. Eikel, Jr., USN. Each unit had appropriate escorts.

The two forces were to proceed to Ailinglapalap Atoll in company where Unit No. 1 was to make the landing and search and then continue to Namu. Unit No. 2 was to assist Unit No. 1 if necessary and subsequently to land on Ebon and Namorik Atolls and Kili Island.

Ailinglapalap -- The Task Unit departed Kwajalein Lagoon 18 March at 0925 but returned soon after as the LCT loaded with five tanks was considered to be overloaded and unseaworthy. Subsequently, the tanks were left behind by order of the Atoll Commander. The expedition set out the next morning and arrived off Wotja Island, Ailinglapalap Atoll at dawn on 20 March. It was learned that there were 39 Japanese troops and 3 Japanese civilians on Ailinglapalap Island. Troop Unit No. 1 was landed at 1809 near the center of the island, set up a beach defense for the night and questioned some natives as to the Japanese positions. Unit No. 2 came ashore the next morning and its commander, Major C. W. Shisler, assumed command of the entire ground force. Contact with the Japanese was gained at the western end of the island at 1010. Heavy machine gun fire was received but the Japanese were gradually cut down by mortar fire and action ceased at 1348 with 37 of the enemy dead. One Jap escaped and one was unaccounted for.

In the fight on Ailinglapalap Island five casualties, two battle and three non-battle were sustained.

At 1700 Major Shisler turned over responsibility for the remainder of its mission over to the Commanding Officer Unit No. 1 (Major Sperling) and by 1910 all troops and equipment of Troop Unit No. 2 were aboard LST 127 and ready to proceed. Troop Unit No. 1 remained ashore for the night, and the next day after vain search for two Japanese civilians said to be on Bigatyelang Island and taking two others at the village of Airek on the eastern end of Ailinglapalap the force reembarked prior to darkness.

Prior to embarkation the proclamations concerning change of sovereignty were read, the American Flag was raised with due ceremony and Lieutenant L. C. Berquist, USNR, the Civil Affairs Officer, distributed a supply of food to the headman in order to establish goodwill and to relieve a dietary situation that might have grown serious.

Namu -- Troop Unit No. 1 got underway for Namu Atoll at 0730 on 23 March and arrived off the southern end of Lugagi

Island, at the extreme south of the atoll, at 1327. Scouts sent ashore to adjoining Leuen Island returned at 1535 and reported there were one Japanese policeman and a school-teacher with a wife and three children on Namu Island at the extreme northwest of the atoll. The vessels entered the lagoon at 1700 and anchored for the night in the south end. At 1110 the Task Force arrived off Kaginen Island at the northeast of the lagoon and landed troops shortly thereafter. No evidence of any Japanese occupation was found. A native in a native canoe was despatched to Namu some twelve miles to the west with a surrender note to the Japanese. The troops reembarked, got under way and landed at Namu at 1610. "The Japanese inhabitants were on the beach with a white flag. Information (concerning their number) was correct with the addition of one (1) child." There is no information available to account for this discrepancy.[1] The American Flag was raised at 1829. A Japanese plane which had come down on the beach some months before was destroyed and the troops reembarked at 2004.

On 25 March at 0752 the ships got underway, proceeded south to pass out of the lagoon by Anil Channel, near the southwestern end and then turned northwest for Kwajalein which was reached that evening at 1936. Major Sperling, in his report, calls attention to the invaluable services of the native scouts who in every instance gained information which was remarkably accurate and timely.

While Namu was under investigation seizure, Troop Unit No. 2 had its own further realms to conquer. At 1100 22 March the Task Force got under way for Ebon Atoll, the southernmost of the Marshall Islands. Scouts were landed at dawn on Toka Island at the west of the lagoon (which is nearly circular) and at 1130 reported there were twenty-five Japanese on Ebon Island, the long snaky island at the south which is not unlike Majuro Island in shape and relative position.

The Japanese inhabitants comprised five soldiers and twenty civilians including two women and two children. There were no Japanese on other islands.

Plans for contacting the enemy had been based on the ships remaining outside the lagoon, and after some uncertainty as to whether the Task Force could pass inside, it was determined to revert to the original plan. At 1515 23 March the first wave landed with no resistance at Rube Point on the northwestern tip of Ebon Island. At 1903 no contact

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[1]Report of C.O. Troop Unit No. 2.

having been made with the enemy by the patrols, defenses were prepared for the night. Meanwhile, a reconnaissance had been made of the island to the north of Rube Point. At 0750 24 March the patrol continued its search of Ebon while other units were sent to reconnoitre the three islands to the north of the channel.

Meanwhile, at 1100, the enemy were met with at a point where Ebon Island begins to narrow down. By 1120 all was over. Seventeen Japanese including one woman were dead. The Marine casualties were two killed and eight wounded in action. Four civilians and two children were still unaccounted for and natives sent out to request their surrender returned only with the children, whose father and mother had been killed in the action. On the following day, 25 March, search was continued with the result that the fugitives were rounded up on other islands near the north end of the lagoon. After destroying a small radio station which had communications with Jaluit Atoll, all troops and equipment were put aboard for Namorik Atoll some 65 miles to the northward.

Namorik -- Namorik Island was reached at dawn on 26 March and the native scouts put ashore returned in due course with the information that there was one Japanese charcoal burner, unarmed, who had literally taken to the woods upon the arrival of the reconnaissance force. Patrols sent ashore combed the island without result and "it was decided that his capture would be insignificant in so far as the war effort was concerned and this insignificance did not justify the expenditure of more time in searching for him."[1]

Kili -- At 1645 all troops were reembarked and ready to proceed to Kili Island sixty miles east. At 0650, 27 March native scouts were landed in rubber boats on the southwest of Kili. On their return with a negative report of any Japanese, a small detachment was landed through difficult surf. Six machines guns from a wrecked American plane were destroyed. Because of surf conditions the shore party was unable to put off again until 1600. At 1630 the Task Force was underway for Kwajalein Atoll which was gained about 1845, 28 March.

Reconnaissance Troop Unit No. 2 landed and established American sovereignty on four atolls in seven days. It was thought that the time lost in permitting the native scouts to go ashore only in daylight was more than compensated for by the fact that the scouts had invariably shown preference for these tactics and in all cases had returned with accurate

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[1] Report of CO Troop Unit No. 2.

information.

Marine losses were 2 men killed and 11 wounded in action. Three men suffered non-battle casualties.

On each atoll the Civil Affairs Officer read proclamations establishing a United States Military Government in the name of Admiral C. W. Nimitz, Military Governor of the Marshall Islands and the flag was raised. The natives in every case welcomed the advent of the Americans.

The North Group

Immediately following the successes of the troops engaged in the South Group of Atolls, other units of the 22d Marines were occupied in reconnoitering the North Group, consisting of Bikini, Ailinginae, Rongelap and Rongerik Atolls. The Reconnaissance Force carrying the troops comprised LST 23, and LCI 348 and LCI 345, under command of Lieutenant J. B. Swann, Jr.

The troop consisted of:

Headquarters Unit 2d Battalion, 22d Marines
1 Company Infantry (reinforced)
½ Platoon Engineers
Civil Affairs Party

under command of Major R. P. Felker.

Ailinginae and Rongerik Atolls were to be searched only if native information gave definite evidence of the presence of Japanese on them.

On 27 March troops and equipment were loaded on LST 23 and the force departed Kwajalein at 1830 en route to Bikini.

Bikini -- At 1000, 28 March, Enyu Island at the southeast of the atoll was sighted. The ships proceeded westward and entered the lagoon through Enirikku Pass about the center of the southern group of the atoll islands, and turned east again to lie off Enyu while native scouts were put ashore. Information received was to the effect that there were no Japanese on Enyu but five were living on Bikini Island some seven miles to the north. Four natives were despatched in a native outrigger to demand their surrender.

At 0730, 29 March, the natives returned stating that the note had been delivered to the Japs who "hit their rifles and departed with a box (presumably grenades) to the east beach opposite the native village."

At 0916 troops landed on Bikini Island, but a thorough search failed to reveal the Japs. Late in the night natives were again sent out to try to unearth them. The natives returned early on 30 March with news of the enemy's location. At 0905 word was received that all five men had committed suicide.

Rongelap -- As reports had been received that there were no Japanese or natives on Ailinginae Atoll, under previous orders, it was, therefore, left unvisited. The Task Unit then made for Rongelap Atoll some eighty-five miles east-southeast of Bikini and entered the lagoon by the South Pass at 0930 31 March.

Troops were put ashore on Enlaidokku Island half way up the eastern side of the lagoon, with the object of getting in contact with some of the natives.

It was learned there were eleven Japanese on Rongelap Island some eight miles away at the extreme southeastern end of the atoll. Natives were sent by outrigger to deliver a note of surrender and at 1740 returned with the message that no answer would be given until "tomorrow morning after breakfast." The natives were instructed to return and watch the Japanese so that the troops could be led to their position in the morning.

At 0800 on 1 April the observation tower on Rongelap Island was shelled and destroyed by DE 265 which had been acting as escort to the Troop Ships. At 1005 troops landed on the island from six LVT's and were met by natives who conducted patrols to the spot where the Japs had last been seen. There was evidence the Japs had left in a hurry but that was all. The search was pursued without result on Rongelap and other islands to the north. The next day, 2 April, and that night, the extensive search continued but there were no signs of the fugitives. Dense underbrush hampered the operation. On 3 April at 0645 orders were received to abandon the search and proceed to the next objective. Before departure, petroleum dumps and food stores were destroyed, and the water tanks made unusable. The proclamations were read to the natives, but the flag was not raised due to the fact that the enemy had not been eliminated. No report at hand can account for their vanishing. At 1250 the Task Unit was under way through a heavy sea for Utirik Atoll.

Utirik -- The ships arrived off the west pass at 0700 on 5 April. It was considered that conditions in the pass were unfavorable to the passage of LST 23 and the troops were launched in two LCVP's and six LVT's in the open sea. Landings were made on Utirik Island at 1035 after a six to seven

mile trip in the landing craft. At 1200 enemy fire was received and a sharp fire fight ensued. A flanking party sent to the right of the low earth barricade from which the Japs were defending themselves succeeded in enfilading the position and putting out of action a Lewis machine gun. Fourteen Japanese were killed. The remainder of the island was searched but no other enemy was encountered. The radio station on the island had been demolished by bombing raids on 27 January and on 15 and 16 February. The remaining enemy installations were destroyed and search was made for fuel dumps but only a few drums turned up.

There was a large native village on the island, in good condition and completely deserted. It seemed probable that with the elimination of the Japanese the natives would return to it. The island was clean of underbrush and completely covered with coconut palms. There were good fresh water wells. At 1800 the Task Unit was underway for Roi Island, Kwajalein Atoll, which was reached at 1230 on 6 April. The expedition had cost us one man wounded.

Rongerik, Bikar and Taka Atolls were not visited as it was determined they were uninhabited.

The Northeast Group

At the same time that Rongelap, Utirik and other atolls in their vicinity were being visited, a second Task Unit had reconnoitred Ailuk and Likiep Atolls and Mejit Island. The troops were aboard LST 127 which was accompanied by LCI 346 and LCI 449, and consisted of:

Headquarters Unit, 3d Battalion, 22d Marines
1 Company Infantry (plus 1 platoon) reinforced
½ Platoon Engineers
Civil Affairs Party

under command of Major Earl J. Cook.

The Reconnaissance Force was under command of Lieutenant Commander A. M. Daniels, USNR.

Ailuk -- All surface units left Roi Island, Kwajalein Atoll at 0700 on 30 March and at 0608 the next morning sighted Ailuk Island at the extreme southeast of the atoll. At 1000 scouts who had been landed returned with the report no enemy were present. Despite the hazard of shoals inside the lagoon, the condition of the sea was such that launching of LVT's off shore seemed hardly preferable. The parting of a ramp chain, however, decided matters and the three ships made their way inside, and anchored off Ailuk Island at 1600.

At 1700 on 1 April troops went ashore in four LVT's. The natives were assembled, proclamations posted and the colors hoisted. Food was delivered to the Chief for distribution. He was also presented with some cigarettes (this is written in March 1945) which no doubt went far to increase his affection and respect for the sovereignty of the United States. At 1000 the troops reembarked and an hour later were underway for Mejit Island, fifty miles to the eastward.

Mejit -- At 0400, 2 April, the ships were about 3/4 mile off Mejit in a heavy swell. While preparing to send scouts ashore, one boat was swamped but the scouts finally got away in the dinghy. Their arrival was considered "questionable" but though they were unable to land, they were picked up some hours later by one of the ships.

Attempts to land troops were abandoned until daylight, when the LST stood close in and launched the first LVT at 0820. By 0906 six LVT's had landed without opposition at the center of the island.

At 1100 natives reported there were seven Japanese in the southwest corner. At about 1300 upon request of the shore party, LCI 346 and LCI 449 laid a rocket and 20mm barrage on the Japanese positions while the troops covered the area with mortar fire. By 1600 all seven Japanese had been killed, without casualty to the attacking forces. At 1830 the proclamations were read and the American Flag run up.

Reembarkation began soon after and was not unattended by difficulties. One LVT had previously broken down and had to be sunk after going adrift frequently. At 2048 recovery of the LVT's began, but in a bad sea, increasing as the LST drifted to leeward, the time involved in each operation was considerable. At 2135 the entire ramp carried away while two LVT's were still out in the cold. Because of the impossibility of taking them aboard and the possibility that if beached they might be examined by the enemy, they were destroyed by gunfire and demolition charges after guns and portable equipment had been removed.

While the Task Unit was en route to Roi Island orders were received at 1010 on 3 April to occupy Likiep Atoll. Course was accordingly altered and at 1130 the ships lay to off the South Pass while scouts were sent ashore. Upon their return with information that Agony Island was uninhabited the ships entered the lagoon and anchored off Likiep Island. Troops were landed about 1540 on both Likiep and Roto Island to the north. No enemy were found and reports from natives stated none were present. The

proclamations were read, the colors hoisted, and food distributed.

At 1915 the shore party was reembarked but departure was delayed until the following morning in order that shoals and coral heads which abounded the lagoon might be visible. At 1003 on 4 April the Task Unit got underway for Roi which was reached at 0800 on 5 April.

There is one point of interest which has not been touched upon. On Ailuk the question was raised as to whether the people could now pray again and considerable pleasure was expressed when they were assured that they could. On Mejit Island, during explanation of the proclamations, the announcement that the people were now free to worship as they pleased was greeted with a burst of applause.

In forwarding the Report of Operations into the Lesser Marshalls to the Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps (Lieutenant General H. M. Smith, USMC), Rear Admiral A. D. Bernhard, USN, the Atoll Commander of Kwajalein Atoll added to his endorsement:

> "During the period 7 March 1944 through 5 April 1944, the 22d Marines, under the operational control of this Headquarters, occupied twelve atolls and three islands of the Lesser Marshalls. These operations provided an opportunity for the more junior officers of the regiment to exercise command during actual landing operations of Expeditionary Troop Units. In all instances the officers and troops of the 22d Marines executed their missions in an outstanding manner thereby greatly assisting in placing the visited atolls and islands under the jurisdiction of the United States."

American sovereignty had been established over a water area of approximately 60,000 square miles. The 22d Marines (reinforced) had landed reconnaissance forces in the Lesser Marshalls on twenty-one islands without opposition and on eight against Japanese resistance.

Aur, Erikub, Ujelang

There remain but two of these little Odysseys to chronicle and in these actions, units of the Marine Corps were not engaged. Shortly after the return of the expedition from Utirik Atoll, all elements of the 22d Marines were embarked and sailed away from Kwajalein Atoll for service in another theatre of operations. A brief account should be given here, however, as the next to the last chapter of the conquest of the Marshalls. The three atolls involved are

Ujelang, most western of the atolls, Erikub, th
of Wotje and Aur which lies close to Maloelap.

On 20 April, 1944, AVP ONSLOW, in company with departed Kwajalein at 1213 with Company "I", 3d Battalio.., 11th Infantry, USA (10 officers and 150 men) en route for Ujelang Atoll. At 1400, 21 April the ships arrived off Wide Pass at the southwest side of the atoll, eventually entered the lagoon and anchored off the western end of Ujelang Island at the extreme southeast of the atoll. The following morning at 0650 troops were landed and at 0800 an additional force went ashore. No resistance was offered to the landings.

Meanwhile, YMS 91 made an exploratory sweep of the lagoon with a view to its suitability for seaplane operations. At 1315 the troops encountered resistance at a point 400 yards west of the radio station which previously had been bombed out. Eighteen Japanese were killed and the search of the island was completed. All troops were returned aboard by 1800.

Beginning early on 23 April and at various times during the day there were several alerts as planes were picked up on the screen but only one proved to be Japanese and its pilot made no hostile demonstration. Meanwhile, the shore party investigated the other prinipal islands of the atoll without encountering either enemy or evidence of enemy installations.

At 1530 all troops were reembarked and the expedition arrived at Kwajalein at 1200 on 25 April having successfully accomplished its mission.

One last word which concers an entry in the war diary of the Atoll Commander, Majuro Captain J. F. Grant, USN) for April 1944. This is the th effect that a reconnaissance trip was made to the small atolls of Erikub and Aur, the first a few miles from Wotje, the other adjoining Maloelap. The task group was under the command of Commander D. J. Brimm, Jr., and was boated in CI's 347 and 372. The force left Majuro on 17 April and returned 21 April. No Japanese were found. At present writing (April 1945) there is no fuller account at hand of the expedition which placed the last of the Lesser Marshalls under the sovereignty of the United States.

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